This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

**Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

**About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

6000399785

600039978%

THE

# TOWERS

OF

# RAVENSWOLD,

*&c. &c.*

J. G. BARNARD,
*Skinner-Street, London.*

THE

# TOWERS OF RAVENSWOLD,

*&c. &c.*

## CHAP. I.

"Whatever farce the boastful hero plays
Virtue alone has majesty in death;
And greater still, the more the tyrant frowns."

YOUNG.

At the close of a desperate struggle between king Edmund, surnamed Ironside, from his extraordinary strength, and Canute, sovereign of Denmark, which caused a division of this kingdom between them, Ethelbald, after encountering the toils and fatigues of battle by the side of the former, returned to his castle with a view of passing

the remainder of his days in peace and tranquillity.

It was called Ravenswold; situated in a most romantic vale in New Forest, Hampshire, supported by all that rudeness of scenery which rouses contemplation, and obliges us to confess nature in her element; it commanded from the turrets in the front, over groves of oak, a view of that part of the channel, washing its own and the picturesque shores of the Isle of Wight.

Its dark and awful towers frowned upon the wilds beneath, and seemed to bid a stern defiance to the grandeur of the scene where Neptune calls on Triton to proclaim his sway. It was erected on a square; at each angle were lofty turrets commanding a view over the vast groves of ancient elm, oak, fir, and yew, in the back ground, with other smaller ones branching above the interior. A stupend-

ous wall surrounded the castle. It was encompassed by a very wide deep ditch, over which was thrown a portcullis of stupendous dimensions. In short, a distant view of this romantic pile was calculated to inspire an awe at its magnificence, and a reverence for its lofty owner.

The Earl had passed the meridian of life, and was fast descending into the vale of years. His person was notwithstanding still commanding; he had a most penetrating eye, though grey hairs flowed upon his temples; a colour was yet apparent in his cheeks, though the lines of deep experience were interspersed around; he was courageous, but withal austere, and inclined to jealousy. He had fought nobly, from the time the Mercians deposed Edwy, in favour of Edgar, who was grandfather of the present king, Edmund Ironside, and from Edmund's banners he had just returned.

His approach was hailed by the applauding shouts of such of his vassals as did not attend him to the field, and his foaming charger, as he arrived at the gates, (which were thrown open at the sounding of the horn, as the drawbridge lowered) tore up the earth with pride, seemingly conscious of having safely restored to the bosom of the family his warlike master.

The virtuous consort of the veteran met him in transport on the bridge; their joy was mutual. Her name was Gunilda; she was highly descended, possessed many accomplishments, and her face portrayed beauty in an advanced stage; she was in point of temper and manners a superior companion to her Lord.

Gunilda was followed in her congratulations by Adeliza, a young female consigned to the guardianship of Ethelbald, by her parents, then sleeping in the dust

Her father enjoyed vast possessions whilst living, but survived every branch of his offspring save the one in question, to whom the inheritance now fell; her mother had been dead some years before. The father had ever been on the most noble footing with the Earl, and fell by his side, driving Canute to his ships in the foregoing reign of Ethelred, having previously exchanged directions of friendship.

As Adeliza consequently becomes a prominent feature through the gloomy labyrinths of our tale, it is necessary to be somewhat particular in the delineation of her character, person, and features.

Trained up under the auspices of Gunilda, she had acquired most of her perfections; possessing the highest sense of honour and virtue, her chastity might indeed be compared to Lucretia's, before Tarquin stole with his infernal stride into

her chamber. Her mind was of that superior cast, though timidity did not so soon overpower her, as it does great part of her sex in these days; yet were her manners gentle as the dove's, her temper unrivalled, and she had a heart that expanded with charity and bled at the tale of sorrow, whenever it met her ear.

Her form was not of the tallest stature, nor was she by any means a diminutive figure; but so beautiful was the symmetry of her shape altogether, sculpture might confess, that in her person its proportion had been outdone.

Her hair was of a beautiful light colour, almost a flaxen, forehead high, eye-brows arched, as if penciled for those of an angel. She had an eye of such a lovely peculiarity and richness of expression, seldom to be met with even in the courts of princes; her nose was prominent and finely formed; on her rosy pouting lips

sat the dew, such as we learn dwelt on the lips of Hebe; her chin was small and pleasingly shaped. Every embellishment her face could reap from the operations of her soul, or her figure from her action and gestures, were displayed in a superlative degree. To conclude, with all these shining qualities, both of mind and person, that poison which so often destroys heaven's brightest work, had not disseminated itself here; no, vanity once put to the blush by her good sense, and declined attacking her again.

The Earl had been the father of two children. Elinda his daughter died when she was only eight years old, and Alemund, his son, fell in battle at the age of nineteen.

After receiving the various shouts of joy at his return, and the ceremony of meeting Gunilda and Adeliza ended, they adjourned to the castle. What are the

sensations that arise in the bosom of the valiant, when having encountered the perils of war, in the protection of their country, they find themselves preserved where others have perished, and surrounded and feasting with the very beings whose peace and safety they have secured. He who could withhold the meed of praise due to the returning hero, is unworthy the society of his fellow creatures; his heart can only be the seat of spleen, and his bosom the shelter of detraction.

On their arrival in the great hall, Ethelbald availed himself of the first moment to present to Gunilda, a youth who had saved his life when surrounded in the heat of the battle. His name was Florimund; he had no parents living to his knowledge, but had been an adventurer in arms from his boyish days.

"I was surrounded," says the veteran, "no power of my own could have saved

me; but this new plumed hero rushing in dispersed them, and sheltered me when even hope was fled. I shall reward him as he deserves, he shall be placed near my person, and now the wars are over reap in quiet the reward of his past services;—receive him therefore to your good opinion."

Gunilda surveyed him with admiration; Florimund bowed. Adeliza, who during the speech of the Earl had fixed her eyes indirectly on the young soldier, suddenly withdrew them and sighed deeply.

Florimund, who seemed to be better descended than his present situation led him to believe, was rather tall in stature, but exceedingly well formed; he had a commanding air and a peculiar grace in all his actions. Though courage was his native quality, mercy had ever been predominant in his heart. He had a great

store of personal charms, and the display of his features was harmony in perfection.

The day following the ball was tastefully decorated for a splendid banquet. The horn at the portal sounded frequent and merrily; not as when some armed band strike on the shield to bid its lord defiance. Warriors and nobles eagerly assemble to join the festive round, clad in the extreme of ancient brilliancy; the bruised spear, the battered shield, and other implements of war were hung up, as tokens of the deeds they had performed in arms.

Gunilda sat in state; the deeds of Ethelbald sufficiently elevated him in the hearts of all present. On his right hand sat Florimund; on the left of the noble hostess Adeliza held her seat. She was the admiration of the nobles. "the table

round;" nor was Florimund lost to the enamoured sight of the ladies, after his story became known.

The harp and timbrel sounded through the hall, merriment increased with elevation, and cheering shouts re-echoed to the founder of the feast; the toils and dangers past were now forgotten; the goblet had drowned all human care, and excess of joy every where pervaded the lofty grandeur of the scene.

Nor was the celebration of the Earl's return confined within his castle walls, for the wide extended plain became a scene of transport, also, among the surrounding peasantry. Under the spreading white-thorn, the peaceful harper sat, whilst surrounding numbers, having feasted, mingled in the dance.

The scene of rejoicing ended, the castle was again in that silence and tranquillity which give birth to reflection, and strike

the pleasing contrast that so powerfuly aids the operations of the soul, where refinement and mental strength preside.

Among the number of the minstrels that added to the harmony of the festive scene, two, on pressing solicitations to the Earl, (mingled with much artifice,) were at length suffered to remain, and become a part of his household. We particularly mention this, as they will hereafter be found instrumental in the operations of the more busy part of this narrative.

## CHAP. II.

"O woman, lovely woman! nature framed thee
To temper man; we had been brutes without you:
There's in you all that we believe of heav'n,
Amazing brightness, purity and truth,
Eternal joy and everlasting love!"

OTWAY.

DURING this pause of quietude through the castle, Adeliza wandered from one apartment to the other, but experienced not that composure she had heretofore done. She would first examine one grotesque figure of the inlets, then another; then sit her down and sigh.

At last she passed into the armory, where, after surveying the different weapons that had accumulated through all

the Saxon wars, she suddenly dropped into the following soliloquy.

"What is the matter with me? Sure I am not well; something ails me I'm certain; for I have ever been very fond of employment, and could not bestow too much time on my little improvements; but I am now restless and indifferent. Before I came here I was fatigued with walking, now I cannot sit in quiet nor occupy myself in my usual pursuits. These I think," said she, rising and surveying them, "were the weapons of the Earl in the last battle he went forth to; and this armour was Florimund's! The devil take him for coming here.—Why did he not preserve the life of some one else, instead of the Earl's, then he had not teazed me with his presence; but now the remembrance of his story interrupts every other thought, and renders me over to a kind of restlessness I know not how to describe—heigho!"

At that moment Florimund entered the armory. Adeliza was covered with confusion. Seeing Adeliza he craved her pardon for the intrusion, and was bowing to retire, but she, somewhat recovering, exclaimed, "he should by *no* means go; she had so often examined the curiosities of the place before, and they must in a great part, be new to him." On condition Adeliza did not quit the apartment then, Florimund consented to stay; this threw her into fresh agitation, but she was obliged, at last, after much solicitation to remain.

They surveyed the armory again, and commented on the different implements men had invented for the destruction of their own race. Each would willingly have changed the subject to a theme more tender and endearing; but Adeliza's delicacy prevented her from giving a hint, and Florimund felt himself so much more

her vassal than her equal he could not venture on what he thought might be received as a most daring and unlicenced liberty.

On their return to that part of the armory where Florimund's suit was hanging, the fair one again stopped to survey it. He would have passed on, but Adeliza solicited his stay: she questioned him many things concerning it, when going round to examine every part more minutely, on one shoulder piece and the side of the cuirass, she descried blood: "What means it?" hastily said she to Florimund.

The youth incapable of returning an answer, from the effect of her sudden discovery and question, turned away to conceal his emotion, but not before Adeliza had perceived the tear that bespoke his noble nature, as it glistened in the corner of his eye, and dropped from his cheek to the ground.

The maid was alarmed.—"What have I done, what have I said?" she cried, "oh, Florimund, forgive me if I have questioned you improperly; believe me it was done in haste, and without a thought of wounding your feelings."

"Your pardon," he replies, "it is I that am to blame, for not resolving your question before, but a sudden weakness I am sometimes subject to, overcame me.—Dear Lady, when in the field, each man is compelled to deal death to the enemy, and scatter his foes with vengeance wherever they oppose him, in such a struggle much blood must be spilt; thus did I obtain that, and in the hurlyburly of the war we heed it not; but when the fight is over, and our passions a little more calm, to drop a tear for those that are slain, is a failing that will sometimes overcome the stoutest heart."

"O this is a gallant noble hearted youth," said Adeliza, as she turned away to weep as he had done.

"Ha! Adeliza weeping," he cries, "nay then, we will drop the subject, dry up your tears. I think I hear some one on the stairs; for heaven's sake do not let them see you have been crying." At that instant the bell rang for dinner, and they adjourned.

In the evening, Fleurimond took a solitary walk under the castle's walls, and reflected, not without some secret pleasure, on the success of his interview with the fair Adeliza; though he had not touched on love, still he had paved a way that might enable him to adventure with more confidence on the subject, whenever he did commence it.

The sun had just sunk below the horizon, the feathered songsters of the adjoin-

ing groves were all retired to rest, save Philomel, whose warbling notes re-echoed along the vale. The bird of night issued forth in quest of prey, and the web-winged bat flitted from the battlements, whilst the hum of the beetle, and the barking of the distant mastiff announced the approach of night.

When all was still the notes of a beautiful toned harp broke smooth and harmoniously on the enchanting silence of the evening. Florimund was at first puzzled to guess whether it was one of the minstrels, Gunilda, or Adeliza, that touched the strings so dexterously. Advancing nearer whence the sounds proceeded, he soon ascertained it to be the performance of one whose notes enchanted as they flew; the instrument was accompanied by the celestial tones of his sweet Adeliza, and he could have listened to them till dawn with pleasure.

He was passionately fond of music, and being before unacquainted with her capability, in that science, he listened with the greater avidity. The fair lady executed several airs, and accompanied them with a perfection, that might have done credit to more enlightened times. What was Florimund's astonishment at length, after she had struck a few chords on the instrument, to hear her chaunt as follows:

"And have you a Nymph? oh, be thou sincere;
If so cruel Florimund, what brought you here?"

"Could I possess vanity enough," said the youth, "to believe that short composition alluded to me, you should not, loveliest of creatures, long wait for a reply; but oh, no, there may be more Florimunds than one, and I am doomed to remain in this castle ever miserable,

ever in sight of one I adore, yet such our difference of circumstance, I dare scarcely adventure to address her."

The harp again broke on the tranquillity of the evening, rendering that tranquillity *celestial*. Presently the soft tones of the fair one, thus continued.

" His courage was destined, the bold Earl to save;
And fortune has ever rewarded the brave!"

To this she again repeated the foregoing with a degree of pathos, no one, unless experiencing the same tender passion glowing in their bosom, could have displayed.

"I need no longer doubt," exclaimed the enraptured youth, "I love and am beloved, and it only now remains our loves should be mutually understood!"

Just as Florimund had terminated the

last speech his attention was attracted by a glimpse he caught (through the darkness that overshadowed them) of two figures that were gliding along behind the wall that surrounded the ditch. It seemed his exclamation had disturbed them from their situation, and probably from a conversation they were secretly engaged in at the time. Determined, if possible, to know what their purpose was, at that late hour, he stooped below the parapet of the wall that encompassed the castle, and followed round till they again made a stand, resuming their conversation.

The more elevated form of the two, appeared to be wrapt in a large cloak, or something of drapery that hang loosely about him. "As you are sworn by the most solemn oath," he observes, "to abide in sincerity, so ye keep that oath great will be your reward.

"When I break it," replies the other, "may instant death—aye, the worst of deaths, be my portion."

"Your companion, as well as yourself, I may depend upon; I have found you *hard men; I have proved* you to the quick, or I had not thus greatly commissioned you—but as I observed before, according to your conduct, so will be your reward."

"Name not the reward, if we can render you a service—that's all."

"This evening's information gives me the means of commencing the attack with wonders; and when I do begin, galling as were my injuries, so potent shall be my revenge!"

"Aye, so it ought."

"Well now we'll separate; step this way, my horse is tied beneath a bush, adjoining the thicket."

"Then the plan you have laid down is concluded on?"

"I do not see how we can amend it."

With this kind of mysterious language their voice and figures, were soon lost in the darkness of the hour, and Florimund left to reflect with amazement, on the very extraordinary conversation his ear had been witness to.

He flew immediately to the Earl, and acquainted him of the circumstance, but he, seemingly conscious of his own safety, apprehended no danger from the event, and contented himself with observing, "it must have been some of his vassals, who, on their return from labour, would relate to each other strange stories, to shorten their evening's journey home."

Florimund, did not presume to thwart the opinion of his noble patron,

nor press the matter further; though he was well convinced a design was forming against some one, whether in the castle or out he could not determine, and the only satisfaction remaining was anticipation.

The day following, alas! proved pregnant with circumstances little to be expected; but of such a serious nature, as at once to change the face of things, and throw the whole castle into confusion!

## CHAP. III.

——"Not poppy nor Mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy sirups of the world,
Shall ever med'cine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou ow'd'st yesterday."

SHAKSPEARE.

SOME two miles distant from the castle within a natural cave in the rock, a most singular and interesting Recluse had taken up his abode. He appeared to labour under insanity, but as he was found perfectly harmless, Ethelbald permitted him to remain there, and many from curiosity flocked to visit him.

He was familiar, but his conversation disjointed and incoherent; still amusing

to some, and not altogether void of wit, at intervals. What appeared rather extraordinary, he would often times leave the cave, and be absent several days; indeed it seemed as if he had another residence, and that he visited both alternately; but it was generally understood, when he absented himself, it must be either to range the forest for recreation, or else search for provisions.

The day previous, (during the time one of the minstrels were present) it had been agreed on by Gunilda and Adeliza, they should pay a visit to the cave the next day, and take poor Osric (for that was his name) a basket of provisions, to leave if they chanced to find him in his shelter. Adeliza knew the Earl would be too busily engaged, with affairs of state, to attend them; therefore fixed on this as a favourable opportunity to solicit Florimund might wait on them.

It was consented to, and the intelligence announced to Florimund, of the honour allotted him, which was received with no little satisfaction. Still the recollection of what he had witnessed the evening before—the mysterious presence of the characters—and their conversation, equally puzzling, weighed heavily on his mind.

The Lady Gunilda, Adeliza, and Florimund, set out for the residence of the Hermit. They had not been absent half an hour, before, in an apartment the Earl was obliged to pass through, he perceived lying on the floor a parchment epistle; taking it up, he found, by the characters, it was addressed to his Lady, and unsealed; curiosity led him to examine it, but what was his surprise, in the perusal, to find the following its contents:

DEAREST LADY,

Believe me I am transported beyond imagination, at the favourable opinion you have of me, and the desirable reception you have given me in your heart. I shall be ever proud of shewing you the kindest attention, in the absence of the Earl, whose influence time must diminish. To-morrow when we visit the cave, it is but to absent ourselves with a suitable excuse for a few minutes from Adeliza, and we shall have an opportunity of saying and contriving a thousand things to further our secret happiness.—Till the wished for time arrives, believe me to be,

Dear Lady,

Your's faithfully,

FLORIMUND.

N. B. Be careful to destroy this epistle as you value your own peace.

Ethelbald stood as it were petrified; thought seemed locked up for a time within herself, and every animal function suspended. At length, (after pacing the room some time in silence) as water pent up, forces the confines and carries all before it, or as the thunder bursts from the sulphureous air, which gathers in an unusual calm, so did the Earl break forth into a paroxysm of rage and grief, almost bordering on distraction.

"What have I read?" he cries, "can it be possible? sure 'tis a dream? and yet I hold the accursed instrument in my hand that proclaims her falsehood! False with whom? With one whom I had plucked from obscurity to load with opulence and honour, whom I had picked up a stranger, seated at my table, and almost adopted as my son. O vile ingratitude! I have nursed a reptile in my bosom, and soon, how soon he has turned to sting his

preserver. But by this hellish scroll, that speaks my shame, it appears *she* was in the first instance to blame—aye, aye, no doubt—woman we are taught to believe was the first aggressor even in Paradise, and why should we expect any other here. All hope of happiness and comfort on this side death has now abandoned me! What are all the laurels I have gained in the field; what are the high honours I maintain at court; what is the veneration and esteem in which I am held by my most inestimable friends, or all the homage that is paid me by my vassals—nothing now—trifles light as ether! for Gunilda's false; Gunilda in the evening of her life is false, and Ethelbald's grey hairs are stained at last by a worthless consort's foul dishonour. Had Adeliza and the young serpent been attached it would not have surprised me, indeed it was what I wished; but for

this old adultress; fie, fie, fie! my blood coagulates as I dwell on the reflection. Shall I follow, and at a distance, witness this scene of diabolical infidelity? Confusion light on the suggestion! No, rather let me hide me from the blessed sun for ever; avoid all converse with my fellow man; and for the sight of woman, oblivion on oblivion, hide her from me to eternity!" So saying, he retired to his apartment and awaited in the most poignant agony, the return of Gunilda, Florimund, and Adeliza.

The morning of their visit to this poor maniac was one of those when we almost fancy we can witness the growth of things, and nature seems all around as it were, to sing for joy. The honey-suckle twined round the branches that grew near it; the white thorn threw forth its agreeable odour; the bee flew from flower to flower collecting its sweets, and

the grasshopper played among the herbage, accompanying her sport with her song.

Florimund grew more and more intimate with Adeliza as they continued in discourse, and the pure flame that had kindled in their separate bosoms, increased as they moved onwards: the youth was determined, before their return, should an opportunity occur, to declare his passion.

On their arrival, to their great satisfaction, they found this Recluse leaning against the mouth of the cave, apparently in deep reverie.

At first he appeared to take no notice; presently he raised his head, and moving his cowl, suddenly caught sight of them; he started back at their unexpected presence, but recovering, crossed himself and blessed them.

"How do you do, Osric, this morning?" enquired Gunilda.

"Dear Lady," said he, "how does the lily? It toils not, neither do I; but we have had a very high dispute this morning about our cloths."

"Indeed," she replies, "what about them?"

"Which had the finest vesture, Madam, but I got the better of my opponent, for though yellow is a very gay colour, still my garments had *that*, and twenty colours beside."

"But the lily is white," she observes.

"And white is no colour, Lady," he replies.

"You certainly succeeded in argument and stood superior in your raiment," observed Adeliza.

"It was the sun smiling on the rainbow, sweet lady, but a cloud hiding one,

the other vanished—there's mystery in that."

"Call you this madness?" said Florimund apart.

"You will find him wandering presently," replied Gunilda, "if you continue conversation."

"Do you not find this habitation rather lonely sometimes?" asked Florimund.

"You bear the form and image of a God," he cries, "have you a soul? Your figure reminds me of days that are past.—Oh, I have seen——." "What?" enquires Adeliza, fearfully.

"The playful curlews, fair one; they sported upon the surface of the water as the waves grew bigger and bigger, and the sky dark around, 'Run, run, for your lives,' said I to a score of vassals journeying homeward, 'Run, or your wolf-skin garbs must stand the pelting of the storm.'"

"A storm ensued then, I presume?" says the young soldier.

"A dreadful one," replies Osric. "The sea had nearly flowed into my habitation, till the spirit that presides over the turbulence of the waters forbade it. There rained such stores of imaginary wealth, I thought I had stocked my cave with lucre; but when I awoke the next morning, the storm was over, and all the treasure gone!"

"Do you then sigh for riches?" interrogated Adeliza.

"Such, as *you*, I sighed for once, and *fame* and *honour*; but I was robbed of all. Oh, the remembrance of it rushes on the recollection, and sets my brain on fire! The day shone bright before me; suddenly as by the magic power of some fiend, a dreadful change arose, and I was thrust out with indignity. I have battled with it since, and storm and sun-

shine are now to me the same; I heed not any of nature's convulsions, after those I have experienced here," placing his hand on his heart: "but I am called upon within, I'll return to you anon."

"That immediate burst of feeling, after he had recurred to love and fame, and honour, must surely denote he has been most deeply injured by some one. Who is it could have hailed him from within?" says Florimund.

"No one," returns Gunilda; "that was only a flight of fancy, or rather an error of the imagination."

"Say you so; how truly harmless he appears;" observes the youth. "Hark! I hear him returning."

On his re-appearance he informed them, "he had only been called aside to be ridiculed, the evil spirit often served him so."

They next presented him a basket of

provisions: he thanked them, and placed it in the cave. "It would perhaps prevail on the spirit not to torment him so," he said; "but for himself, he had left off eating!"

To this strange remark they very delicately enquired, how he lived then?

Looking very piteously at them, and shaking his head, "Alas!" said he, "on disappointment!"

"That is but an empty kind of food to one exposed as you are to the seasons," remarks Florimund.

"I do not know what you mean by being exposed. I basked in love; I met disappointment; I struggled for fame, I found disappointment; I fought for honour, disappointment was my reward; and wherever I looked for comfort, enjoyment, or happiness, disappointment arose before me: I have now no choice—for sleep, I find disappointment; for food,

disappointment; for peace of mind, disappointment; but so as I do not meet it in my last bold and enterprizing determination, this tattered world may rid itself of me whenever it is its will."

"Ha! what great deed are you about to undertake?" asks Florimund; fearing he might be bent on suicide.

"How dare you thus interrogate," he exclaims. "I love to dwell best where the lamp ever burns, where merriment prevails, and moles to use their claws, despise the light of day; begone, and leave me to myself."

"May I not stay, Osric; I would speak to you further?" tenderly enquires Gunilda.

The maniac inclined his head as in the affirmative.

"Then go you, children, and spread our provisions beneath yonder thorn," directs Gunilda, "we shall there be

shaded from the heat of the sun, and I'll join you almost before you are prepared.

This was a fortunate moment for Florimund to break his passion to his adorable Adeliza; and yet his heart beat so within him, and such was his agitation altogether, he feared he should not be able to speak to her on the important subject.

His confusion by degrees however forsook him, he dropped into a more easy conversation with Adeliza, and was not a little transported, when she assured him with certainty, from experience before, Gunilda would not join them again within half an hour. "Heaven be thanked," exclaimed Florimund to himself; "I have never yet been a coward in battle, and to turn poltroon in love would be worse still; this is the hour that makes me happy or miserable, and the powers of affection

smile upon my cause!" They had by this time reached the spreading bush, under which this dreadfully important, but tender and endearing, tale was to be enforced.

## CHAP. IV.

———" The lover sighing, like Furnace with
A woful ballad, made to his mistress' eyebrow."
SHAKSPEARE.

" She longed her hidden passion to reveal,
And tell her pains, but had not words to tell;
She can't begin, but waits for the rebound,
To catch his voice, and to return the sound."
ADDISON'S TRANS. OF OVID.

GUNILDA had seated herself on a rude stone that lay at the mouth of the cave, and appeared in earnest conversation with Osric, as Florimund was spreading provisions for their rural repast.

" Nay, I insist on helping you, Flori-

mund, in this arrangement," observes Adeliza.

"Allow the trifling task to be mine," most tenderly replies Florimund; "as I am so far a dependant and your inferior, it is my duty ever to wait on you."

"Inferior! dependant! let me intreat you will never name yourself in such humiliating terms. How are you dependant? in what are you inferior? You can never be under obligation to the man whose life you have saved; nor inferior to any one, after the deeds you have wrought, unacquainted with your origin."

"Your liberality amazes me! But great as is my surprise, so far am I encouraged to adventure on the score of freedom."

"I shall like you the better, freedom and candour I admire of all things.

"To be plain then, fairest of crea-

tures; and before Gunilda arrives to interrupt us, your admiration of those two qualities cannot be equal to an hundredth part of what I feel for *you*."

Adeliza's face was immediately suffused with blushes, and though most agreeably surprised, she was, at first, obliged to turn away to conceal them.

"If you will not deign to smile on me in return, you will at least pardon the good opinion I have of you, and spare my presumption. I could not longer withhold the communication; all nature seems to toy in love to-day, and could I be an exception—the sporting zephyr bears upon its wings love's sweet perfumes, and I must share in the delightful gale. Oh, Adeliza! do not spurn me hence, but let that gentle bosom rise in compassion, and afford a shelter for my love."

The fair one was so overcome with

confusion, it was with difficulty she could make a reply; at length recovering from her agitation in some degree, she softly lisped, "she had as yet been a stranger to the tender passion."

"The powers of love be praised!" exclaimed the enraptured youth; "then you have a polished space still undefaced on your heart, and capable of receiving the soft impression; though undeserving, should I be so fortunate as to obtain a place there, believe me, loveliest of women, I should feel myself the most fortunate creature in the world!"

"Nay, for Heaven's sake!" she tremblingly utters; "Florimund forbear: Gunilda comes this way."

"No, sweet Adeliza," he replies, "she still maintains her seat in conversation with the poor unhappy maniac. Who knows but it was love first drove *his* exalted brain from out of the cavity? and

would you be the means of banishing *another* to the desert woods and wilds that here surround us? Oh, impossible! it is not in your gentle nature to be capable of such a cruelty; turn then in pity, and listen to the pure and earnest efforts of a passion I cannot avoid, but (considering myself beneath you) tremble to declare."

"Again, referring to a difference of circumstance when in reality there is none, she cries, you hurt me beyond measure."

"Oh, pardon me, for mercy's sake, as I love you, so do I tremble at offending you; and could I be the means of bringing on that heavenly countenance a frown, to disturb the various charms that sport there? never, never! Those glistening and soul-piercing eyes, enchanting lips, and lovely dimples, were formed alone for smiles; and cruel must that being be

pronounced, who would cause a gloom to mantle on them."

"No more, no more; for look, contrary to our expectations, Gunilda is really approaching."

"It is even so; and every moment she occupies as she advances is precious to us indeed! say, before she arrives, you do not hate me?"

"Hate you, Florimund! what have you ever done to apprehend so?"

"I have made a declaration, in the first place, presuming; in the second, perhaps, disagreeable."

"Suffice it to say, I could not hate any one; and to be offended with those who profess a respect for me would be cruel."

"That cold word *respect* does not comprehend the passion I feel; it is love, all powerful, all conquering love, that has taken possession of my soul, and you

alone can give me relief! dare I continue my addresses?"

"I must not admit of any thing contrary to the pleasure of the Earl; he was my father's friend, to me he has proved such, and the least I can do in return is to shew myself grateful."

"If that is the only obstacle, I fear nothing. But pray tell me (Gunilda I see comes near), for all the love I have for you, my sweetest Adelizal dare I not hope for a smile in return?"

"Oh, Florimund! how can you put such a question to me now?"

"It is that I most wish to know, as it has been that alone which I have feared."

"Then cease your fears! as I admire *freedom* and *candour* in others, so would I wish those qualities ever to prevail in myself. Though too sudden an acknowledgment of what is felt for each other,

may tend in vulgar minds to destroy the passion altogether, still I trust it will not, Florimund, be thus with you; for where it does so occur, as the object (which ever it be) becomes indifferent, it ought likewise to be esteemed unworthy. I blush to own, yet, as I despise affectation, must confess since the first moment I saw you, and heard your story, you have possessed my heart; despise me not for the confession: without you I could never be happy; to you I resign the cause; succeed with the Earl and Gunilda; abide in constancy, and be assured of my everlasting love!"

The words of this celestial creature, so liberal and unexpected, were received into the heart of Florimund, and treasured according to their deserts. He was about suddenly to clasp her to his bosom, in the warmth of his extacy, and pronounce eternal blessings on her for what

she had revealed; but she checked him by a sign, denoting the near approach of Gunilda, whom he had totally lost all thought about, by the transport in which he was involved—"Enough, enough," he hastily concludes, "your words have made me happy."

In a few seconds Gunilda reached the spot, and they were soon seated to partake of their choice repast. Her Ladyship gave them to understand, the chief part of the conversation she had with the Hermit after their departure was of a most singular import. He informed her that "the foul spirit that tormented him, had of late given him the power to divine future events;" and amongst other strange things told her "as there was a change in the moon that evening, so there would be at the castle; tranquillity was about to remove from thence," he said, "and the olive branch would in future grow elsewhere. The great might have it in

their power to pronounce on those beneath them, but they should abide in justice, or thereafter fear revenge. Great and terrible were the deeds that would occur, and what he hoped was—judgment would fall on the heads of those who deserved it."

Gunilda regarded the intelligence as the wanderings of a broken imagination: the lovers were at first intimidated at the news, but, after due consideration, subscribed to the opinion of Gunilda, and partook of their provision with enjoyment.

As the thief bursts the habitation with surprise during the stillness of the night, or the convulsions of nature suddenly occasion the earth to swallow up whole cities, so did the remembrance of the two figures Florimund espied under the wall, and their extraordinary conversation, dart in an instant on his affrighted

imagination; and such was the emotion it occasioned, as plainly to be perceived by Gunilda and Adeliza; but on their questioning him of the cause, he had the presence of mind to conceal *that*, and substitute something in its place trifling and artificial.

They presently arose to return, but the heat was too oppressive to permit them to move hastily; surveying the beauties of nature they prolonged their walk till evening. Gunilda was amused and tranquil; the lovers exchanged the piercing glance, and Florimund endeavoured, in love, to forget what had been the occasion of so much consternation in his bosom.

They arrived at the castle, as the great luminary of day was taking his departure down the western skies. Having separated, Florimund made it his first business to find out the Earl, in order to

have an another conference with him respecting the scene he had witnessed near the wall the evening previous, at the same time to acquaint him of Osric's divination.

He found him in his apartment, and the name of Florimund being announced to Ethelbald, orders were given for his admission; not without very great but restrained emotion. The youth again begged the Earl to bethink him of the conversation he had heard between the two mysterious characters, and what, in corroboration they had received from this new diviner at the cave. He spoke of the danger of the one, and the probability of the inspiration of the other, concluding his address with every earnest wish for the welfare of the Earl, Gunilda, Adeliza, and the household.

Ethelbald who, during this application of Florimund had concealed his agita-

tion, now burst forth with an energy that at once surprised and petrified the astonished youth.

"And is it possible," he cries, "that man can be the image of his Maker whom we are taught to believe is all purity, when under such a form and such a countenance he can hide a heart foul as the seat of darkness. We grasp at the godlike figure with an earnestness denoting our friendship, but when closed within the compass of our knowledge its beauty shrinks to a skeleton, loathsome to behold! Why need I dread the enemy *without* my walls, there I am safe; but what was once my sanctuary and place of comfort *within* is now become my danger and my hell! That maniac shall hence—no prophet he; more likely far a pander to those crimes that set the blood thus boiling, to destroy my happiness for ever—my brain too burns at the reflection.

and all my composition is distorted from itself, that fools may laugh and wiser men may pity me. Hark, to the whisper as I pass along—the ridicule that follows! Instead of admiration and renown now as I ride through the public street, my fair reward will be dwindled to pity and contempt! Ha! are you still before my eyes?" he continues turning and gazing on Florimund, with a look of the most violent anger, "Alligator! (seizing him by the throat) I'll tear this frame of thine to countless atoms, and hurl them to the prowling wolf a prey!—Hold! what am I doing? I that have advanced with cool intrepidity to the battle of thousands, am now carried away by individual provocation—Shame on such conduct! am I not myself?—Death and confusion!" These last words he pronounced with dreadful violence, and rushed in frenzy from the apartment.

Florimund was so amazed, perplexed, and lost at the excess of the Earl's conduct, he became at his departure insensible, and sunk to the ground.

## CHAP. V.

"Hence ev'ry sound that's either soft or kind;
O for a war, like that within my mind!"

LANSDOWN.

"Thought! busy thought! too busy for my peace!"

YOUNG.

THE domestics, before the return of Gunilda and the juvenile pair, had witnessed the Earl's extraordinary change, and attributed it to a malady of the brain arising from some other cause; this (as soon as they could with propriety) they communicated to the Hostess, who, without calling Adeliza to accompany her,

flew with the most tender anxiety to his apartment.

On her arrival great was her surprise to find Ethelbald absent and Florimund prostrate and motionless. In the act of endeavouring to raise and support him, she was all at once thunderstruck, hearing the Earl's voice without pronounce—"This shall not suffice; I'll have a full explanation."

The door immediately flew open, and the infuriate man appeared! on his countenance sat shame, rage, and jealousy—on her's, alarm, not knowing what was the cause; Florimund still hung his head, insensible on her arm, as she bathed his temples, endeavouring to recover him, and enquired the cause of his indisposition.

Finding Gunilda with Florimund, the Earl started back with redoubled amazement—"What need have I of a further explanation," he mutters to himself, "is

there not another damned proof before my eyes? Hell and furies! can such things be? I cannot bear to think on it, and yet in spite of all endeavour it crowds upon my brain. Ha! withered as we are, still must we seek another sunshine; when we should rather move into the cold shade of the lone charnel-house and appoint a place whereon to lay our bones. The wrinkled hag will next grow amorous, and the youth that does not truckle to her love must limp in lameness after through the world, wrought by the evil power of her witchcraft! I'll stay no longer—I cannot bear to look on what I see—Damnation!"

Ethelbald in this distrated state again disappeared; such was Gunilda's astonishment, she understood not the purport of the little she heard of his speech, but was lost in perplexity.

Florimund began to recover as Adeliza

entered the room, to learn what was the matter, having met the Earl in rage, as she passed along the gallery.

"Alas!" said Gunilda, "I am ignorant of the cause of his disorder, and almost of where I am!—Adeliza, your arm for a support: I was made acquainted by my vassals, all was not right. Entering this apartment in quest of my dear Lord (who was ever before more calm, mild, and gentle) I found Florimund on the floor insensible, and the Earl departed: presently he returned, and murmuring an incoherent speech to himself, again left the room apparently in the most violent anger.—Ah! now it rushes on me—Osric's prediction—we are lost!—we are lost!"

As she uttered these words, she fell back on a couch, senseless, as Florimund had done before. Though now awake from the swoon in which he had

been, still every thing was confusion, and nothing could he relate to Adeliza, he however assisted in supporting Gunilda.

Again Ethelbald made his appearance. "I've lost the epistle," he vociferates, "and one of you have found it—it was the accursed proof. What is this I see, Gunilda now retired from herself—aye, this new passion creates such freaks for sport—where is the epistle? How is it you break on my apartment thus? You have found it and 'twas policy to conceal it from the world; give it me—nay, by the infernal powers, but I will have it, though it were buried in the very inmost corner of your heart." Seizing Florimund again—"Stay! stay my arm! This lunatic, they say, foretels us what will happen—busy must be his brain then now, if it but teem as mine does with what shall come to pass—he

can tell me of the scroll too? How! a maniac do all this? Jumble of absurdity! No matter, under the cloak of darkness to night I will adventure to his cave; there may be more in this character, than we find in every fool—yes, yes, I will away to night!"

He again retired, leaving the parties in grief and amazement. By the assistance of stimulation Gunilda recovered, and they removed from the Earl's apartment.

Florimund was rendered truly miserable, as was Gunilda; and Adeliza in the same cause as Florimund, was almost distracted; happy as the morning appeared, how sullen now the change! They attributed it to something wrong in state affairs.

All without the castle was shortly dark as Erebus, when Ethelbald, attended by

only one of his vassals, mounted his foaming charger, and rode off to the cavern of the mysterious Recluse.

The night proved one of those very tempestuous ones which in the summer often succeeds sultry weather, from the air becoming foul and over-heated in particular places. Violent thunder, lightning, and rain came on, and the wind blew with such unusual violence, the Earl and his attendant could with difficulty keep the saddle.

Nothing tended to stay the inflamed imagination of Ethelbald. He had at first been inclined to doubt what he could not help believing scarcely—the epistle—but immediately after finding them together in his apartment—Gunilda bathing Florimund's temples, with every appearance of the tenderest affection—and her own insensibility succeeding, it con-

firmed him in an opinion all was foul as it represented itself.

They soon came within sight of the mouth of the cave. Ethelbald perceived the inside lighted by the means of a fire kindled in the middle, around which sat six persons regaling themselves; the sight, from the reflection of the blaze, on their pallid faces, half covered with beard, at first struck him with surprise; they heeded not the storm without, nor had they closed the entrance of the cave for shelter, but seemed a collection of beings unused to the luxury even of those *iron-times*.

"And stubborn as the *mettle* were the men!"

Ethelbald concluded he was right in his conjecture of there being something extraordinary in the character of Osric,

and feared he had been remiss, in granting him the privilege of remaining there so long.

This was a time to discover the mystery, but their number was superior, and their appearance too rugged to allow of being accosted at hazard. The Earl was a stranger to fear, but still did not like to run headlong into danger; he therefore questioned his follower, Harold, what he thought of the scene now before him?

Harold was one of those fellows that might be compared to the cocoa nut: he had a rough outside, but the milk of human kindness flowed within his breast; though he had followed his noble master to the wars, it had not hardened his heart, but greatly improved his courage; he possessed a quick apprehension and a sound judgment in things; and as he seldom appeared over merry, so he was

never known to be sad: his greatest pride was to perform good actions, and to be at peace and harmony with every one around him.

"Though it is not for me to enquire what brought us on a visit to the cave, such a dreadful night as this," he replies, (at that moment a peal of thunder bursting that seemed to shake the very foundation of the globe) "yet it appears, by what I can perceive, the purpose of our coming is defeated. You can, my Lord, have no opportunity of conversing or perhaps seeing the mad wretch that inhabits the cave, whilst it is taken possession of, by the rugged guests we behold. Probably they are strangers, journeying through these parts, and have put in there for shelter, having previously secured and bound the melancholy being that first claimed it as a residence, if so, there is no danger in advancing; but on the other

hand, should they be a band of robbers, six, to two of us, my Lord, will be rather warm work."

"No matter," cries the disturbed Earl, his policy forsaking him, "they must be as you conjectured first, strangers and pilgrims travelling this way—but were they robbers, wizards, or devils, and the enraged tempest to redouble over our heads, I will accost them!"

"Hold! hold, my Lord! Had you not better stay till I return with others of the household armed, that we may approach them in security?"

"Confusion light on those who talk of fear!" he exclaims, his irritated brain having wrought him up to a temporary madness. "Come on, we'll meet them boldly."

So saying, he rode forward to the mouth of the cave, Harold closely following, that he would not sully a promise he

had often made to the Earl, "to follow him through danger, wherever he adventured," though this sort of caprice might have exculpated him.

"How now, you midnight revellers!" cries Ethelbald; "what do you here? Where is that thing of mystery, that recluse, who divines the wonders that shortly are to come to pass—'tis him that I would question?"

To this hasty salutation of the Earl's, one of those, who were regaling themselves, arose to make reply. He was tall, robust, and muscular, from the appearance of his arms, that were bare nearly to the shoulder; on his breast and thighs he wore the remnants of a suit of armour that exhibited some remains of its having once been emblazoned with green and silver; and was equipped for riding, with a huge pair of spurs, though no horses were to be seen. There was one

thing denoted him to be different from the rest in degree; they were all with their visages uncovered, whilst the upper part of his countenance was concealed beneath *a sable iron mask;* he was armed, and over all, when he pleased to throw it across him, he had a long black cloak, his beard was rough, and his appearance to any one, but the half-deranged Earl, in every respect terrible.

Throwing his cloak carelessly over his arm, he thus answered, "Whoever you are dismount with your attendants, enter the cavern, and partake our wholesome cheer. The night's tempestuous, and you, doubtless, seek a shelter; go forth one of you, and tie their horses under the cover of yon trees with our's; come, venture in, and I can speak with you freely."

The horses were led away—the Earl entered the cave with a firm undaunted

step; but Harold had half a mind to break his promise on this occasion, mount his steed, and ride back to the castle.

"As to the being you speak of, we are ignorant to whom you allude," continues the one in the iron mask, making signs to his associates, as the Earl advanced to the light that proceeded from the fire they had kindled; "there was no one here when we arrived, we merely put in for shelter till the fury of the squall was over, and—(catching the features of Ethelbald from the reflection of the flame)—"by hell it is my enemy, and my victim!"

This in a moment he communicated to his fellows, and the other soon returned who had taken charge of the horses; he then gave several directions by signs, and solicited the Earl to partake of their cheer.

"I know not who you are," replies

Ethelbald, "but for once I must forget my dignity, and join in your revelry: the purpose of my errand is at an end, and the extraordinary being I inquired after perhaps, smiling at the forked lightning as it shivers in sunder the monarch of the forest—no matter; here I'll regale till the storm is over, and then return to my castle."

"Are you sure of that?" says the other to himself. Then turning to Ethelbald, in manly tone he observed, "though you do not nor cannot know me, my Lord, I know you well, have fought by your side more than once in the struggle of invasion against our throne and country, and have reasons to remember you that may one day be revealed! You talk of forgetting your dignity; know then to your confusion we are outlaws, and do not heed your greatness, but to punish it. This is but a part of the band of which I

am appointed captain; save in preserving order and good will, I hold myself every way their equal, nor would I wound the feelings of any one through a consciousness of my *superiority*. Pitiful arrogance for man to hold his head erect above his fellow man, because he is richer in possessions! the man superior in mind and great achievements, alone can stand excused for such presumption! Respecting the divination of wonders that are to come to pass, as far as concerns the events of this night, *I* can foretel; you will *not* return to your castle! we are mysterious agents, employed against *the dignity* you spoke of, and it is our business to set all things on a level.—Fear not the storm, my bold associates," he concludes, "to horse, and away!"

Ethelbald and his follower attempted to draw their swords and defend themselves, but were immediately secured,

gagged, and bound to their horses; the captain mounted his, the rest pursued the example, and they made off with all speed, through the violence of the storm, towards the wildest depths of the forest!

## CHAP. VI.

" Yes, it is he—it is my victim.—Now let my arm strike firmly, or palsies wither it for ever."

DIMOND.

THE castle which had for the most part been an asylum for domestic happiness, was now a scene of confusion beyond description. Gunilda was overwhelmed with grief and alarm at the Earl's departure. Florimund and Adeliza were almost heart-broken at their hapless fate. Just at the moment they were about to look up to

him for his consent to their happiness, occurrences they were ignorant of had totally prevented it, and plunged them into a double misery; whilst the domestics ran about in astonishment, wondering what was the cause of such an unlooked for change.

One thing very remarkable had occured to Florimund since he left the Earl's apartment. Having to speak to some one or other of the vassals, he by chance encountered one of the minstrels before alluded to, when what was his astonishment to imagine he discovered the very same voice he had heard addressing the other, wrapped in the dark mantle, as he was taking his evening walk under the castle.

He would fain have questioned him, but there was no proof: again, he conceived himself illiberal to think so, and that it could not be: besides, mystery, like the

night did so thicken on him—he was too much embarrassed for the enquiry—all was grief, perplexity, and disappointment.

Furbrand, (for that was the ruffian captain's name,) and his desperate band, with the Earl and Harold were now far advanced into the forest. The storm was tremendous. Presently he commanded them to halt, and caps were drawn over the face of Ethelbald and his unfortunate follower, that they might have no clue to remembrance, whither they went. Soon after they arrived at the end of this tempestuous journey; and having descended, and put up the horses, the caps were taken off; they were released, and Ethelbald found himself in a most spacious cavern.

From the top of this subterranean abode a lamp was suspended which threw a light every where around; in the middle a

large oak table, at which sat several more of the banditti, some asleep, others drinking; and about on the craggy sides of the cave hung the weapons, helmets, and old pieces of armour they wore for their defence.

"It seems we are at home at last my Lord," says Harold, "snug enough. From this I learn the folly of making rash promises, and more the nonsense of abiding by them. Had I not sworn to follow you through every danger this would not have been my lot; but there, we must endeavour to take it as patiently as we can, and trust to fortune for the rest; when two men go out together in danger, they ought to stick by each other, in my mind, let the consequences fall out as they may."

"True, Harold," replies the Earl, "and the sovereign and his vassal, suffer-

ing under calamity, may soon discover, as you have done, they alike are *but men.*"

"Nay, pardon me, my Lord, indeed I meant it not; for the wretch who would trample on his superior because he is in misfortune is unworthy the *name of a man.*"

"Harold, my follower, you are, indeed, my friend," returns Ethelbald.

"Come, come, arrange yourselves," commands Furbrand, as he seated himself at the head of the table, still concealed under the iron mask; "put the flaggon round and let's be jovial. Here," addressing himself to the Earl, "you behold *my dignity*—here we have riches, and feast ourselves in abundance; but no princely decorations in our palace, or ostentation in our hearts; we despise the world and all its ecclesiastical opinions. Yet was I

born in honour, and have followed the devout into the house of prayer; the outwardly devout, for all within was foul, base and deceitful: the world has wearied us with its duplicity; here we are firm and sincere, sworn to revenge the injuries we may receive, even unto death."

The Earl and Harold were now deprived of their arms. Ethelbald again bethought him of the leader having recognized his person, together with the singular expressions that accompanied his pronouncing it, therefore partook of their beverage in silence.

Harold having more policy, made a secret sign to the Earl, and pretended to differ from him altogether. He knew there was a possibility of their situation being bettered; as such, thought the best plan would be to meet them at first upon their own terms, and thus began:—

"Why, really gentlemen, your principles seem, in my opinion, to be none of the worst, and provided I was not sworn to the service of my present lord and master, I do not know whether I should not propose to join you."

"We must know much of you," proceeds the Captain, "before you would be admitted to that honour; think not, after what we have been driven to experience, that we are credulous. Heavy indeed have been my sufferings; but, as the lion sometimes trifles with his prey, that he may next devour it with more voracity, so I hereafter will glut on mine, which else I could immediately devour."

"So as you do not mean to devour us," returned Harold, "no doubt but we shall in time become very good company. I like your habitation amazingly; every thing about it looks so beautifully fright-

ful, especially that scull and bones you have nailed at the top of the table."

"Aye, there you may see we look death in the face morning noon and night. Death, simply death, is nothing in itself; the being who can inflict the severest insults on a great and noble mind, despoil it of honour, glory, fame, (not to mention love and vast possessions,) but because he is sanctioned and secured by power and regal shelter, deserves not death alone, but death with torture. There sits the object of my mortal hatred," pointing to Ethelbald, "and he shall feel the power of my vengeance—there is the victim I would devour—and there the wretch who one day shall know in direst horror, the story of my privations."

The Earl, starting from his seat, was about to address the miscreant in the sable mask, but he forbade it upon pain of in-

stant death; though he would have been sorry to have seen the blow struck that must have prevented him from prolonging his torment on his victim.

"If it be so," cries Harold, (first pressing his foot on the Earl's, under the table,) "I do not see why I should be punished for another's transgressions, therefore, my Lord, if you choose to be guilty of all these faults for your own amusement you ought to suffer for them by yourself. In return for bringing me into such vile disgrace, I renounce your service and desert your cause. There is something bold and independent in the life I see before me, and I should like to become a member of so noble a calling: rather than have what is called my liberty again, if the Captain will not receive me into the number, here will I fall and die by my own hands." Then taking up a flask, he loudly con-

cludes with, "my brave hearts success to Rapine."

All was silence at first—after a pause the cavern resounded with peals of laughter—"Here is a hop-o'-my-thumb fellow for you," exclaims one of the robbers.

"After that fine speech he will do," cries another.

"Not for our trade exactly," adds a third.

"Did he think to trap old birds so easily," continues a fourth.

"He has called in at the wrong time," says another; and so it went on, till the Captain took up the flaggon and pronounced again, "Rapine," when the repetition of the word, from his followers, shook the cavern to its base.

"You may now perceive our firmness and sincerity," advanced Furbrand, "we are neither to be duped nor shaken.

There sits my deadly hate, and long will he suffer, before I remove this barrier from my brow, to tell him who I am, recount my wrongs, and lastly, plunge this dagger in his heart."

Ethelbald again arose to speak, but was forbidden.

Rising from his seat, the robber continued, "I intended to have had *your dignity* in my power shortly, but not so soon: however, as fate has ordained it, so let it be. Nothing, I knew, could save you from my hands but supernatural aid, and fortunately for me you have never consulted it. That you may be assured I am your enemy, and exult in my revenge, I drink to the secret and undisturbed pleasures of Florimund and Gunilda!" Dashing the utensil on the table, he seated himself with a conscious satisfaction of that blow being effectual, and eyed us

does the rattle-snake, the agonies of his prey.

Ethelbald was torn with a thousand sensations; but his follower, instead of despairing, looked forward with a hope, he would yet devise some sort of plan for their escape.

They were next conveyed to different parts of the cave for confinement, and every day brought out to be tormented with threats and taunting speeches. Harold, from continual solicitation, day after day, to be admitted into their band, had in a great measure won upon them, and a thought, in the end, occured to him that proved effectual. He proposed, if they would let him join them, to prove his firm intentions, he would in the first place murder the Earl, well knowing Furbrand was not likely to admit of his death so suddenly.

This at last banished all scruple, and Harold was received into the dissolute band, without the task being exacted. We have before mentioned, he was a man of penetration and judgment, but it cost him time, and the most earnest entreaty, and ingenious cunning imaginable, before he could accomplish this.

After having been out several nights, armed and accoutred like the rest, he was left with six others, one evening, to watch at the cave. As usual, the old rough oak table supported their brawny arms, and the liquor went merrily round. By one of those fortunate, but trivial circumstances to appearance, which has often won or lost a battle, saved or overthrown a nation, events took a change. Harold had in his pocket a small bottle he took from an old friar, containing a quantity of liquid, distilled from certain flowers,

which he informed Harold, would make him sleep, naming at the same time the quantity. It came to his turn next, to fill the flaggon, which he did not fail to drug highly, and in a short space the influence of Somnus completely overpowered his stubborn and robust companions.

Finding they were in profound sleep, he dropped on his knee and returned thanks to heaven, then rising, flew to the relief of the Earl.

He soon found means to break asunder the strong chain that secured the door of that part of the cavern which confined him. Ethelbald at first could not believe the evidence of his own senses; but, as no time was to be lost, Harold hurried him on. Suddenly they heard a noise at the other end of the cave, and feared it was the Captain and the rest returning; but on Harold's going to investigate, it

was only one of the six had fallen from his seat, under the table; he was still asleep, and snoring like a worn-out pilgrim.

They armed themselves, mounted two of the best horses that were in the cave, and bidding adieu to the half poisoned wretches at the table, ascended. Once more the Earl was allowed to breathe the wholesome air. Alas! for what? but to return to the castle more miserable than ever—firmly assured of Florimund's treachery, and an aged wife's dishonour.

No sooner escaping the horrors of the cave, than the "green-ey'd monster," jealousy, assailed him again, and his brain once more becomes the seat of wild and extravagant thought.

Harold took especial care so to remark the spot, and the course of the forest, as

to know how to find the cave again; but it was not till morning they could discover in what direction to make for Ravenswold. Suffice it to say, they arrived there safely in the course of the day.

## CHAP. VII.

"Can this be so?
Or have we eaten of the insane root
That takes the reason prisoner?"

SHAKSPEARE.

"And I have no counsellor, no friend with whom I may advise."

COLMAN.

HAROLD was enjoined to secrecy of what had transpired to them, though he was still in the dark as to the occasion of the Earl's proceedings; and Ethelbald thought it best that so he should remain.

Gunilda, Florimund, and Adeliza, had all of them separately endeavoured to

discover what it was that thus afflicted him; but his behaviour, when they presented themselves, was so extravagant, they found it expedient to retire.

bald was perplexed, enraged, and
tracted with jealousy; and Flo-
ingratitude, as he conceived it,
his distress. Had Gunilda been
om of youth her conduct would
ave astonished him, but at her
thought it intolerable.
gan to meditate revenge on Flo-
and a dreadful punishment on
gain his heart revolted at the
and he was lost how to proceed.
midst of these disturbed reflec-
he moved about the castle, his
ere struck with alarm.
he was wounded at his great neg-
the business that concerned the
e spoke of it much, and it was

therefore, now received for certain, to be the occasion of his disquietude.

Above all, the first thing to be attended to was the cavern, and the dreadful threats of the undaunted wretch, who had, with his band, taken up their abode in it. What was become of the prognosticator, Osric, he could not conceive, but supposed he had fallen a prey to them at their entrance; at all events he appeared no more at the cave.

Harold was at length commanded to the Earl's presence. He had during his absence, been closely questioned by Gunilda, indeed by every one, from first to last, throughout the castle, "what it was so troubled the Earl?" but, as he knew nothing, nothing could he relate; had he been acquainted with every circumstance, it would have been just as close from their investigation.

"Summon my vassals to the armory," cries Ethelbald, "let them be equipped; we'll to the cavern instantly. Should we surprise the daring horde, it will then be my turn to taunt, for the opprobrious threats I was confined to bear. Oh! that their numbers were equal with ours, that Ethelbald might vent his rage upon their heads, or find in death, a release for the base palsey of his sinking years."

"Arm, arm! and away!" was now the cry. The castle every where in alarm, and none but the Earl and Harold acquainted with the cause. The portcullis was down, the trumpet sounded, and the men in arms appeared on the bridge.

Florimund, at the sound of the trumpet, started up, as does the hunter when the bugle calls, and with an eagerness nothing could restrain, hastily sought the Earl.

Throwing himself at his feet, he thus

accosted him:—"Is it possible, my Lord, an expedition should be thus far on foot and Florimund not to know of it? He, who within a camp has passed the younger measure of his days till now. War was his delight whenever his country called, though peace best accorded with the humanity of his bosom. By deed of arms, my Lord," he continues, "I was raised to the glory of your favour here; danger I have ever followed, and when so many venture out in glittering array to meet it, must Florimund be compelled to sculk within the castle and be called coward, perforce? The god of war forbid! Let me be clad in arms—let me call forth my charger—let me go out and share the fate of the noble Ethelbald."

The Earl, with a look of mingled fury and contempt, broke from the aspiring youth without reply. He still followed

in solicitation, detaining Ethelbald by his robe, who at last threw him from him to the ground, mounted his steed, and commanding his vassals to follow him, soon disappeared.

"Is it for this I have followed arms?" asks the heart-wounded soldier to himself. "Is it for this that I have lain in the open fields—suffered privation—fought against powerful odds—preserved his life, and never wronged him?—Is it for a blow? —Hide me where light never broke upon the eye—hide me from the remembrance of the deed; or arm me with a resolution to revenge this open, this apparent shame. —My honour's wounded, and my fame undone! Oh! Adeliza, hapless is our fate; for I must leave you, and seek some other shelter; I never could remain under the roof of one, who had raised me to an eminence, a blaze of admiration, only to be plunged from its summit amid the

mist of disgrace. What have I done to merit it? What is it thus offends the Earl? and whence is meant this expedition?—Madness all!—Then let me not be rash, for rashness neither betokens courage nor wisdom.—I must know more before I depart.—I will wait the return of Ethelbald, and for that purpose remain a dependant still."

He had no sooner reached the interior of the castle, than he was requested to attend Gunilda. She had witnessed the occurrence from the window of her apartment, and was anxious to know the cause.

Adeliza was present at the question being advanced. He replied, "he was ignorant, as he was of her Lord's malady, for the Earl had not uttered a word that indicated his reasons." The recollection of the blow he had received, that Adeliza, as well as Gunilda, must have witnessed

it, renewed his grief and indignation, and he declaimed against it in a becoming manner before them.

In the midst of this burthen of his grief the fair one retired to weep; Gunilda commiserated with him, having found him warm in the interest of the Earl, since his abode in the castle. Towards the end of his speech, wishing strongly to impress certain truths on the mind of Gunilda, he threw himself on his knee to make protestation, in which posture he was discovered by Wolfred, the Earl's younger brother, who, devoid of ceremony, entered the apartment.

Florimund arose confused; the unexpected presence of one he had *never seen before,* thus suddenly darting upon them, deprived him of the necessary presence of mind; and bowing to Wolfred in the greatest agitation, he retired, leaving Gunilda to explain.

The eye of Wolfred, as he started, and averted it with a significant frown, seemed to forbode an addition to their calamity. Wolfred was one of those men who could put a false colouring on the actions of others, whilst he ever studied, though versed in ill, to represent a fair side to his own.

He was tall in stature, well proportioned, and his countenance (of the sallow hue) appeared to be the seat of dark and potent mystery. Huge whiskers, half covering his cheeks, and mustachios of the most ferocious trim, added to his terrific person. Over his right eye was a deep scar, partly concealed by the sable ringlet that dropped upon his forehead, and another on the left cheek. His hair, which fell in short curls behind, and on his shoulders, resembled the darkest jet. His eye-brows were rugged; his nose long and somewhat thin, cheek bones promi-

nent, chin small, mouth of a peculiar shape, and an eye that would have pierced the basilisk, and started it from its purpose. He had a gait of the most manly temper, and when he trod the apartment his haughty step was as that of Satan's, when first he reached the earth to pace with hellish stride the walks of Paradise. With all this assemblage of extraordinary features, he had the dissimulation of the crocodile, and would ingratiate himself into the opinion of almost any being, he found could be rendered servile to his purposes, which were generally like himself, made up of evil.

Gunilda, after having welcomed Wolfred to the castle, explained the situation and circumstances in question, expressing her sorrow at the Earl's malady, and regret that he should treat with violence and contempt, a man, who had once rescued him from the jaws of death.

"It grieves me much," said the insidious Wolfred, "after the account you have given me of the noble spirit and courage of the stripling. Forget your dignity for once, my noble sister, pursue the boy and bring him back to me; I wish to have some conversation with him. What I shall hereafter advise may be the means of *quieting* all parties and rendering *myself happy*!"

Gunilda followed the artful instructions of Wolfred, and he was left to reflect and contrive as might best serve his ends; that he had some purpose in view his wiles implied, though not to be seen by Gunilda;—his face was as the serpent's skin, glossy from the warmth of its venom.

"I arrived at a most fortunate crisis," he observes, with an inward and malignant satisfaction. "My visit here is of some importance, and these events may

serve to aid my only half-formed project. The boy is handsome; my brother, though he has numbered more years than myself, neither thinks or acts as I do; and my sister, poor weak woman, perhaps, is growing foolish in her old days; at all events I met the girl Adeliza in tears, which sprang, no doubt, from a jealousy betwixt them. Whether all this be so or not, there is at least a fine field given me to sow my insinuations, and let my brother reap the best he can by his reflections. Whilst he lives my pride is suppressed, so is my love for Adeliza—her father in his last moments, having forbade Ethelbald to bestow her hand on me; and in this stripling, this Florimund, as he is called, no doubt I encounter a rival—perdition seize them both! For though I am, as it were, sinking in the valley of years, I burn with a desire for Adeliza, and nothing but my brother's domains can ever

satisfy my ambition. I am at present undetermined what plan to pursue—all is confusion—so much of matter that may help my purpose lies before me; yet in the midst of my arrangements I may be interrupted by the return of the hostess and her young paramour.—That must not be.—I'll depart from hence—but whither? Let me consider.—I'll urge my brother on to be jealous of this nose-gay—draw him and Gunilda into a situation that may ensure what I advance.—spur Ethelbald's aged blood on to revenge.—In the event the lover too must perish.

At that moment a vassal entered to inform Wolfred Gunilda would be glad to see him below in the cedar chamber, near to the western tower.

He started, conscious of his own guilty reflections, from which soon recovering, he bade the *slave* precede him to the apartment he spoke of.

"I obey my Lord," returns Gerald, bowing his grey locks and feeble body almost to the ground. He was a whimsical old vassal, bordering on a state of second childhood, and had spent several years of servitude in the castle before it came into Ethelbald's possession. For the more particular traits in his character we beg leave to refer our readers to what they may find of him hereafter. "I obey, he repeats; "but did not you, my Lord, say something about a lover that must perish?"

"Every lover of evil, good Gerald, was what I meant.—You understand?"

"O, lovers of evil!—ah, I understand, I understand.—The lover of evil, he must perish,—very true, my Lord, very true, by the mass. Since the good Augustine and his fellow monks came into England we have become more civilized. I be-

lieve the whole of your Lordship's family are enlisted under the Pope's banner; but you should not talk to yourself, my Lord, that's wicked—you should not talk to yourself, for when you *talk to yourself*, do not you know you are *talking to the devil*, so says father Ambrose."

"Father Ambrose is a ——."

"Very good Catholic, my Lord, be assured of that. I have often caught him talking to himself notwithstanding, but oftener to the little cherry-cheeked Patelina.—O you should have popped upon 'em as I did the other day, in the refectory. It was Lent time too, to be sure; and his holiness had forbidden all kind of feasting—there they were ——"

"Doing what, good Gerald?"

"Ha, ha, ha! I hardly dare to tell you."

"Nay, out with it," says Wolfred.

"I can't, my Lord, upon my word."

"No hesitation," he cries.

"Ha, ha, ha! I must not, I must not."

"I insist on knowing," he exclaims.

"Well, well, my Lord, you shall," returns Gerald, "only be patient—pray be patient."

"Speak, dotard, instantly."

"Well, well, if you must know—ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha,—they were feeding each other's pretty little mouths, with a beautiful ring-dove pasty."

"Pshaw!" vociferates Wolfred, "is that all."

"And enough too, I think, my Lord, after sealing up the mouths of all the rest of the family, to open their own so wide; but, ha, ha, ha, that was not all."

"Not all say you?"

"No.—Ha, ha, ha,—the little doves will be billing and cooing; but I am very much out if it was not a hawk in company with the dove, there—oh, he did so

paddle and play with her hand—did so chuck her under the chin—so smack his lips, and so—ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha."

"I believe," replies Wolfred, "you have yet a liquorish tooth left yourself, Gerald, though that head of your's is grown grey in experience."

"Ha, ha, ha, I believe I have, my Lord, I believe I have."

"I thought so; but come, lead on to the cedar chamber, my sister will expect me."

"She does expect you, my Lord; but never talk to yourself."

"Lead on, good Gerald."

"I will, my Lord; but do not talk to yourself any more."

"Well, well, lead on."

"Depend upon it there is no good, my Lord, ever comes of a man talking to himself."

"Lead on, I say."

"Take my advice, pray do, and never talk to yourself."

"Hell and confusion."

"Yes, my Lord, you are *talking to the devil* whenever you are *talking to yourself*."

## CHAP. VIII.

"The rich juice, pour'd in a tainted jar,
Turns to a nauseous and unwholesome draught,
But we condemn the vessel, not the wine;
So gentle love, lodg'd in a savage breast,
May change his nature to a tiger's fierceness."

JULIA.

"Thy numbers, Jealousy, to naught are fixed,
Sad proof of thy distressful state."

COLLINS.

THE Earl returned more disappointed and chagrined than ever; the purpose of his expedition having been defeated by the flight of the mysterious leader in the iron mask, and his followers; they had

also conveyed away the whole of their treasure.

Wolfred was with Gunilda, attended by Florimund and Adeliza, as the horn for the drawbridge sounded. The Earl alighted from his charger: his countenance was suffused with mingled passions, and he immediately bent his way towards the castle with a hasty and indignant step.

The domestics informed him of the arrival of his brother, on which he retired to a secret apartment, and solicited his attendance, willing to obtain further opinion before he might be tempted to any rash proceeding.

On Wolfred's waiting on his brother he was informed by Ethelbald of every thing that transpired, was likewise shewn the letter; and a consultation took place on the occasion.

"I would not willingly be too rash," continues the agitated Earl, "but that the proofs appear so plain against her. This artful scroll; their walk to the cave; his being found in her arms after my reprimand; she bathing his temples and endeavouring to restore him; and above all, as a corroborating proof, the words of the miscreant, in the iron mask, convey a chain of proceeding composed of the most ingenious cunning on her part, and the most combined villany on his."

"You must be assured, my dear brother," replied Wolfred, as he inwardly exulted in Ethelbald's torture, "you must be assured how painful the task to me is to afford you advice under such afflicting circumstances; indeed, I am sorry I have had the misfortune to arrive at so unpleasant a crisis; but on the other hand, it would be equally blameable

in me to behold a branch of our house dishonoured, and stand quietly by without ever aiding to obtain redress."

"Most assuredly, Wolfred," he observes, and though you are younger than myself, in point of years, I do not think you are in experience. I married early in life---- you have had more opportunities of watching the dispositions of the other sex, never having solely united yourself to one woman, therefore, to you must I look for advice. But one thing let me first remark, they are at present strangers to what it is that thus disturbs me, unless they apprehend, from having missed the epistle. How did you find them?"

"If I must speak, I must adhere to truth, and if the truth should chance to wound you further, you must not think I am unfeeling. Suffice it then, on my approach, which was sudden as unexpected, I met Adelina in the gallery; she was

weeping, and before she noticed me she pronounced the following words:—'I am surprised and hurt at what I have witnessed; the Earl is strangely deceived.' On entering the apartment, Florimund was on his knee pressing the hand of Gunilda, who seemed much agitated, but on seeing me she started back: the youth arose, and slunk in confusion from my presence."

"Thank you, my brother, for this generous information; I see it too plain, and before long am determined to have revenge, that I may set my soul at rest—rest say I? that is impossible! for when I reflect on such unheard of duplicity, letchery, nay, I may term it madness, at her years, it almost tells me I could not shake it from my troubled recollection, even in another world."

"Yet, be both cool and collected, my Lord, you may then, perhaps meet with

some convincing proof, and on that determine; you are sure, for my own *honor's sake*, I would wish to advise you for the best."

"You are, indeed, my brother, and I will comply with your request; I will be governed entirely by you. But then, reflect on the threats of the being in the sable mask; what can it all imply? It comes on me, like the hurricane, before I can get my shattered bark in trim to withstand the fury of the squall. The safety of my castle I will leave to you whilst I seek renovation in sleep, and avoid the company of the old adultress. Look to her well; if you discover more, pray let me know it."

Wolfred promised he would do so, and the Earl retired to his chamber.

"Now to be bold, and at one aim execute my every purpose," exclaims the brother, whose pride it was to play the villain, independent of his interest. "If

I can but invent some plan that may produce the appearance of a proof of their criminal correspondence, I work the Earl, by degrees, into so extravagant a frenzy, that, under the operation of his disorder, he shall perform whatever I may dictate, to assist my dark intents. Gunilda shall be disposed of in some private way I will hereafter fix on; my rival fall by the hands of the owner of these possessions; or he by my rival; and whichever escape, (as I will appear the advocate on both sides,) perishes at my own will—so will report give out they fell by each other, and my aims be all rendered complete. Let me consider. Hold—a better plan than drawing them together may be to——Ha! by hell I have it. It shall be so; the rest will follow of course.—if I am not thwarted in my expectations"—. With these words he stalked from the apartment.

On his return to Gunilda he found her melancholy, surprised and dejected. Adeliza was weeping, and Florimund tenderly endeavouring to console her.

Wolfred expressed his sorrow at the Earl's unsettled state of mind, but informed them, he could not discover the cause of his malady—his conversation was wild and incoherent, and nothing of direct signification could be gathered from it—one thing, however, he was sorry to state, he had forbidden Gunilda's approach to his chamber.

This information suddenly overcame her, she fainted, and after some hours indisposition, was conveyed to her own apartment. She was borne thither by Wolfred and Florimund, attended by Adeliza and two female domestics—still she remained insensible. It was at this time the crafty and malignant Wolfred seized the opportunity of commencing

those operations which (with others without the castle, more singular and more mysterious) produced the dreadful sequel of these calamities.

Under a pretended anxiety for Gunilda's safety, he dispatched the domestics, one at a time, on different errands, then Adeliza, and in confusion afterwards fled himself, leaving Florimund, with a promise he would return instantly and bring a relief that before had not occurred to him.

Alas! before any female came back, he had conducted Ethelbald to the door of the chamber; who would have rushed in and seized Florimund, but from the previous advice of Wolfred, and his own determination on a more secret, more terrible revenge.

He returned to his apartment burning with the most violent anger, having been roused from sleep to the sight; and

therefore less capable of suspecting his brother's artifice.

Adeliza and the domestics returned; fresh stimulants were applied, and Gunilda began to recover as Wolfred re-entered the room. Finding her after a little time somewhat restored, the latter, with Florimund, took their respectful leave and retired, leaving the domestics and Adeliza to comfort and conduct her to her pillow.

They then adjourned to the apartment from which they had carried Gunilda. After taking some refreshment, a secret consultation took place, that might probably have been the occasion of Wolfred's directing Gerald to conduct his follower (whose name was Barbold) into his presence.

"Here he is, my Lord, here he is," mutters Gerald; "oh, he's an ill-looking dog; when did he wash his face; or is he

troubled in conscience, that his cheeks are of so many colours. His hair stands seven ways at once, as if he was frightened: a pretty follower forsooth. Ha, ha, ha! but never mind, never mind, so he has not picked up that wicked trick of—talking to himself!"

"Sirrah! leave the room," cries Wolfred, rising hastily. "Bless me!" returns Gerald, "I'm gone: what a thundering voice; he does not speak so loud when he is *talking to himself*—I'm gone, my Lord, good night."

"Away, babbler!" he vociferates.

"I can hear you, my Lord; you need not speak so loud: good night, Florimund—good night, fellow—bless me, what an ugly man! I'm afraid he *talks to himself*, as well as his master, though I found him joking with the girls below; by the mass, I cannot think how they could like to talk to such an ill-looking

fellow; but they do, they like ill-looking fellows!

"Still hesitating!"

"Oh, no; I'm gone my Lord!—ah, dear, I remember when I was young, the little toads used to say I was too good looking for them by half—they like your ill-looking fellows, ah, ha, ha—they like your *ill-looking fellows!*"

"Begone, I say."

"I'm off, my Lord! Bless me! what *a thundering voice!* Lord! what *an ill-looking fellow!*"

From this hour all was mystery and confusion in the castle, and our readers may prepare themselves for some of those horrors attendant on the unenlightened and iron times with which the subject is connected. The castle bell re-echoed with unusual sound—the rain beat against the stained casement, the wind hurtled through the rusty bars of the turret—the

mastiff howled beneath the walls, and the bird of night screamed from her inaccessible shelter, as Wolfred framed the last arrangements of the night, before he retired to his chamber.

O man! how ought you to reflect before you thus become involved in evil, to destroy your happiness for ever—before you stain your soul in the blood of your fellow man, to seal your misery hereafter.! The pleasures of this transitory state may allure—wealth may be tempting—love enticing and revenge be sweet—but the enjoyment of all we can obtain, is but of short duration, opening an awful prospect to another world, a dread removal to Eternity!

## CHAP. IX.

——————" Come sealing night
Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day
And with thy bloody and invisible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
That makes me pale."

SHAKSPEARE.

ASTONISHMENT reigned through the castle in the morning, to find Florimund, with Wolfred's vassal, had fled its walls.

Adeliza was borne down by melancholy in his absence, though he did not fail before his departure, to acquaint her of the cause.

Wolfred seized on this occurrence as a proof of his guilt—charged him of having connived with his follower, who

had robbed him of a sum of money, and thus adduced so many seeming proofs of Gunilda's perfidy, that Ethelbald determined to destroy her!

In one of his angry fits of delirium, he had given her to understand the cause of his disorder; she was so surprised and wounded at the charge, it deprived her of the power of defending herself at the moment, and this he construed into an acknowledgment of her offences.

The Earl had a romantic residence situated in the Isle of Wight, where to court contemplation he used sometimes to retire: but the time was approaching that the very place wherein he had sought communion with heaven, was to be polluted now by diabolical invention, and an altar erected to blood.

Again the threats of the mysterious ruffian in the iron mask occurred to him, still he resolved to venture out, whatever

might occur, such was the disturbed state of his soul.

To counteract all suspicion of his intentions, he listened afterwards to the vindications of Gunilda, with every appearance in her favour; but his smiles were those of the wild rose, beneath them was concealed the thorn.

In a few days excuses were framed, and they adjourned to the Isle, attended by Wolfred and a few domestics. The situation was peculiar; their shelter a compilation of rocks, timber, thatch, moss, and evergreen—commanding an extensive view of the channel, standing on the very eminence that overlooks that dangerous passage called the Needles (from the aperture the great god of the waters has wrought by his frequent visits in the storm.) No compass aided the adventurous mariner o'er the deep, in sight —no friendly lighthouse reared its illumi-

nated head above the shingles—no ostentatious king had built his castle at the river's mouth; but the same land that nature offers to our view at present, stood bold to the astonished eye.

Their mode of living during their stay, was similar to that of the fugitive Egyptians—in those days they were pleased to accustom themselves to hardiness, and it afforded besides the advantage of acquiring, how to value comfort, as they suffered privation under the change.

All behind at the castle was perplexity and astonishment. Adeliza was sole mistress, but her own grief and anxiety too far overcame her, to look at all into the proceedings of the domestics; and as in all bodies there are some whom circumstances do not easily confound, so was it there.

Harold exclaimed against all merri-

ment during the absence of the Earl, considering his indisposition—others laughed at his grave physiognomy and moral demeanor—Patelina insisted that if she was not merry, when she was young, she might not have it in her power to be so when she was old. Gerald, though he had not a tooth left, vowed he was of the same opinion, and the vote was in favour of Momus.

We must not omit, that in the midst of their revelry many points of the established order and decorum of the castle were broken through, and amongst others a strange minstrel had been admitted, of rather singular appearance, at the intercession of the other two; he betrayed great curiosity, and seemed withal on peculiar understanding with the others.

One night (or rather morning) soon after the castle bell had tolled one, an alarming circumstance took place that

caused much astonishment, and at once put an end to all enjoyment during the Earl's absence.

Adeliza, pensive for the loss of Florimund, conceived a sort of foreboding all was not well with him, and though he had yielded her his reasons for departure, yet something seemed to whisper her intelligence of some mishap. Busy in reflections of this nature on her couch, she could not enjoy sleep, but was musing on the events of the past, sadly apprehensive for the event of the future, when on a sudden, through an aperture in the wall, totally unknown to her, three men disguised entered the apartment. The door was double locked and strongly barred—they could not have found access that way; each of them had a black cloak of skins thrown over his brawny shoulders, the first of the three a small lamp in his hand, and their faces were

disfigured in a rude manner. The foremost of the three raising the lamp above his head perceived the fair one in bed, and they began to whisper how it were best to proceed, supposing her asleep.

"The horses are waiting now without the walls you are sure?" asks the ruffian with the lamp.

"I am certain of it," replies one, "I have just received the signal."

"Let us lose no time," says the other. "We must return by the subterraneous passage."

"And prevent her alarming the castle too," continues the first.

"That is easily done, a few threats will effect it—she is but a woman," returns the second.

"And therefore the more likely to have recourse to her tongue!" adds the d thir.

"We must gag and bind her," sternly enforces the first villain.

"Agreed!"

They were now approaching softly towards the bed, when one of the three, extending his arms (to preserve balance on tiptoe, and avoid disturbing the object of their search) struck out the light; this mishap was succeeded by a general sound of regret, under the vehement expression of "Damnation!"

"What's to be done now? We are lost for to night."

"Yes, a pretty business we have made of it."

"We shall never be able to find our way back through all the windings and turnings of the secret way we came."

"Never! never!" returned the other two, "and yet to stay here is death if we are taken; no doubt she has concealed

the key of the door that leads to the apartment from the gallery."

"Let me examine," says one.

"Do so," replies the other with the lamp.

"And I'll discover if she be still asleep," adds the third.

"By all the powers of mischief the key is here."

"That is fortunate!"

"Nor has our confusion awakened her, she breathes more steady than my pulse beats."

"That I'll be bound for—I tremble myself."

Adeliza, who had counterfeited sleep, though under the most chilling and deadly terror, here felt a serious necessity of rousing that courage to her aid, she before knew not she possessed, and that assisted her to deceive these agents of terror and the night.

"Let us secure the aperture, and renew our lamp," continues the one.

"But who will venture to go," says the second.

"Who will venture to stay, you mean," mutters the third. "We will go together, the embers are yet alive in the great hall."

"Then who will guard our prize."

"That task be mine," quickly replies the ruffian, who appeared their leader; "to no one else will I resign it."

"Well, then, we go."

"Be cautious how you turn the key, and lift the bar, the old oak door may creak on its hinges and alarm some of the domestics."

"We leave her to you, Captain!" they whispered, as they retired gently from the apartment and descended to the hall.

All through the castle was still as

death, and the one who was left to watch in darkness advanced towards the bed, wherein lay the trembling victim of their perfidious errand. Placing his hand on her alabaster bosom, that revolted under the touch, the sable miscreant, after observing, "she was still asleep," indulged in the following soliloquy.

"In addition to the great measure I am acquiring of revenge, here I shall likewise obtain what will constitute much of my pleasure; but one thing I am resolved on, not to act but by voluntary consent. I remember the time that, in such a situation as this, I could not restrain the warm blood of my youth, but must have seized on enjoyment instantly; experience and indulgence, as well as severity, has since taught me how to lengthen out the pleasures of expectation, and copy the wisdom of the serpent, by exulting and feeding on the sight of my

prey, before I fall on and devour it. But hold, should any alarm take place below I may be discovered here, that would be poor policy—I'll to the gallery and listen, I shall then be prepared to rush to the aperture."

With silent stride he quitted the chamber; this was Adeliza's time to attempt an escape, and with palpitating heart she arose, leaving the most favourable appearance she could of the couch; with one garment thrown loosely over her, she walked softly across the room, and invoking Heaven's protection placed herself behind the door they had to enter on their return.

Presently the two, who had descended for the light, were heard approaching the pannel of the secret passage, which unfortunately for them was fastened by a spring on the chamber side; they were somewhat interrupted on their return, so

adopted the course they had done before.

"Hist! hist!" and a gentle tap were several times repeated till the leader re-entered the chamber, he immediately caught the signal and made to the opening, which was opposite to the side the door moved. The trembling fair one seized this opportunity of gliding out like a sylph, and before they reached the bed was safe from the power of their evil designs.

Finding she had escaped, rage, shame, and horror possessed them, and they rushed down the aperture, closing the pannel behind, as the alarm bell of the castle startled the domestics from their slumber and summoned the surrounding vassals.

Every one repaired to the cedar chamber, where (after obtaining succour) Adeliza had taken shelter: the two minstrels

were considerably behind in their attention, and the stranger who had been admitted within the walls a few days before was no where to be seen; in the hurry of alarm it was supposed he must have fled, but his presence being an innovation during the Earl's absence, all were silent.

After a due consultation it was thought prudent the owner of the castle should be immediately apprised of the mysteries that had transpired: various were the opinions relating to what had occurred, and in the end Harold was the person (attended by three other vassals) deputed by Adeliza as ambassador to the Earl.

Fear prevailed through the castle; every one imagined they heard strange noises; the tread of footsteps in the gallery, and the galloping of horse without the walls: the raven perched upon the close-stacked

chimnies, and the owl screamed with unusual terror from the battlements.

Harold arrived with his menials in the Isle of Wight at sun-set, and made with all speed to the Earl; but as if "confusion now had made its masterpiece," and horror meant to redouble on horror, what was the information he went to communicate compared to the dreadful tidings he had to receive!

On his entering the romantic shelter of Ethelbald he found the domestics secured in an inner cavity, the Earl and Wolfred chained to a rock near the entrance of the habitation, and this perilous situation was coupled with the dreadful intelligence of some ruffians in disguise having forcibly dragged away Gunilda!

Harold, as one deranged, darted from the place and ran he knew not whither; after some time elapsed he returned to the abode with hair erect, eye half starting from

the socket, and vacant and terrific stare—"She's gone!" he cries, "the saint has perished! she's lost, lost for ever!!"

"What mean ye," cried the Earl, with a mixture of *feigned astonishment, grief, and terror*, as Wolfred also *assumed* wild and hasty inquiry.

"Alas! alas! oh, heavy day!" exclaimed Harold; "let comets mark its anniversary to the end of time! I fear, I dread to tell of its calamity!

"Nay, out with it, and let us be accursed hell's dark dominion deep!" raves the afflicted Earl.

Wolfred seemed terror struck for the moment.

"O horror! horror!" proceeds Harold. "I had not gone a mile from this spot before I came up within hearing of the desperate blood-hounds, that tore her angel form away, guided by the clashing of swords and the sparks of fire that issued

from the contest. Their cause of quarrel (by an expression dropped from one of the two ruffians that fled) must have been a wish on the part of the third to have preserved her life; but that, alas! was not permitted: the stronger side overcame, and from the summit of the towering and craggy cliff, e'er I came up to fell them to the earth, and so prevent the deed, Gunilda (I know not for what sins committed) was driven headlong o'er the precipice into the bellowing surge! At the noise of her fall I stood at first as it were petrified, till recollecting the villains were making their escape, I followed in pursuit, but grieve to say, the same infernal power that prompted them to the deed afforded them escape, robed in the darkness of the night!"

Every thing bore the appearance of terror and confusion. Harold released the parties, explained the business of his

embassy, and every search was made through the island to discover who were the murderers, but all in vain.

After visiting the spot, and *feigning* to drop tears of affection in the briny flood that had borne away the partner of his early years, Ethelbald, with Wolfred and the few vassals that came over with them, together with Harold, returned again to Ravenswold.

## CHAP. X.

"Hung be the heav'ns in black, yield day to night;
Comets importing change of times and states,
Brandish your fiery tresses in the sky,
And with them scourge the sad revolting stars,
That have consented."

SHAKSPEARE.

"Doors crack and windows clap, the night's foul bird
Rock'd in the spire, it screams aloud!"

BLAIR.

THEY arrived, and entered the gates without interruption from Iron Mask and his associates; still the remembrance of him made up a part of the confusion and terror that pervaded the mind of the

half-distracted Earl; especially from what had recently occurred to Adeliza.

Wolfred secretly enjoyed his brother's affliction, viewing him as the barrier that separated him from Adeliza; inflamed as were his passions he restrained no effort that might ensure him success, and to complete his hopes and crown his ambition, his brother's death it was, must afford the means of enjoyment.

Adeliza was almost heart-broken at the sad intelligence of Gunilda's death, and in the news of that, her alarm at the castle was forgotten: the vassals mourned deeply the loss of so good a mistress, and Ethelbald, though he had again reached the castle, it was but to indulge in a murderer's reflections, as did the sojourner of Nod.

To be brief respecting what had happened in the Isle, suffice it to say, they were events of their own instigation; they

had suffered themselves, and caused their vassals to be secured till the return of the murderers, (employed by Wolfred at the solicitation of Ethelbald) to support appearances, should any one arrive in the mean time, as did Harold.

Again the tortured mind of the Earl was forced on perplexity, by the news of the extraordinary visit that had been paid the fair Adeliza: he was no stranger to the intricate passage that led to the chamber, but imagined every one else so. By the description that was given him of their figure and appearance, it occurred to him it might have been the robber and two of his band; the thought for a moment chilled him.

The alarm of the fate of Gunilda was soon spread abroad, and the universal regret expressed for her loss began to awaken the Earl to a sense of remorse

too keen to endure amidst the bustle of state affairs; he expected every day to be summoned to the court of Edmund, on business of importance.

Evening approaching, he took leave of Wolfred and Adeliza, retiring as he hoped to rest. The western sky presented the appearance of what is usual (as the season advances, and Sol diffuses his rays more direct) a tremendous thunderstorm. Adeliza sighed for the presence of her beloved Florimund to console her. Wolfred paced with hurried step the pavement of the castle parapet, as if in open defiance to the jarring elements he shuddered to behold. The storm increased till at length it became a hurricane, so dreadful, as not to have been equalled in the remembrance of the oldest inhabitant. Ethelbald arose from his couch; he could not sleep, the fever of his soul

increasing as the tempest gathered over their heads, and the enormity of his sins presented themselves.

The hoarse thunder sounded through the valley, and the electric fluid dashed in sunder the stoutest timber of the forest; even Wolfred trembled at the sight, and his heart sunk within him as he again took shelter in the castle, and fled to his own apartment.

The Earl had by this time gained the hall, and summoned several of his attendants; he appeared greatly agitated, and inquired in tremulous tones for his brother.

He was answered, that Wolfred was viewing the awful sublimity of the tempest from the parapet of the castle wall; no one having witnessed his return to his chamber but the domestic Harold, who was not then present.

" Awful and sublime it is, indeed, my

Lord;" mumbles Gerald. "I have witnessed many during the fourscore and odd years I have looked upon this world, but never remember so terrible a night as this before. The sentinel vows there have been strange sights in the air—others that lamentable noises have been heard about the castle—some go as far as to say they have seen the ghost of our dear lady."

"Ha!" exclaims Ethelbald, "thy words surpass the lightning's force; the one alarmed me only, the other has darted through my brain!"

"O dear! I'm sorry for it, my Lord; very sorry for it—I did but speak—holy Augustin, pardon; and do you also forgive me, my Lord. I am sure I would not say a word to remind you of your loss—I would not urge your remembrance to all the prudent, and noble, and upright, and just, and virtuous, and good,

and endearing qualities she possessed; not I for the world!"

"How! again!—what dost mean old grey beard? Surely thou wilt not drive me mad."

"Mad! O lord, no; I don't like mad folks, they are apt to be dangerous, fiery—(bless me, how it lightens! I thought it had blinded me); and then again mad folks are turbulent and noisy—(what a loud peal of thunder, it shook the castle to its foundation!)—I'll go open my window and get to bed."

"Let me be rid of that hoary-headed dotard," cries the Earl; "bring my brother hither."

Two of the attendants retired in search of Wolfred.

"I'm going, my Lord, I'm going," proceeds Gerald; "do not hurry me, pray: I am too much troubled with shooting pains to be hurried this weather—

Pray, do you, my Lord, ever have any shooting pains?"

"Silence, and quit the hall."

"Bless me! what a rage he is in!—Well, I'm gone, my Lord: you had better open your window, my Lord. To think the storm should hang over *us* in particular; it seems as if it was to awaken *some one* to repentance! Well, Heaven bless, and turn all wicked hearts. I am easy enough, for my part, and the matter of that, if it was not for my shooting pains—you did not tell me, my Lord, whether *you* had any *shooting pains?*"

"Take him from my sight, I command you!"

Some of the domestics here laid hold on Gerald to bear him away; as he retired, he still kept muttering to himself—"Ah! it's a dreadful night—strange sights, horrible noises—bless our dear lost Lady!"

"Away with him!" repeats the Earl.

"O, she was an angel!" continues Gerald, as they were obliged to drag him towards the portal. "Do not go mad, my Lord---open your window, my Lord. Oh, my shooting pains! --what a dreadful storm!---If you are a sinner repent, my Lord, and do not beat your poor forehead about as you do. I'm afraid, my Lord, you have some of my *shooting pains!!*"

By this time the two domestics had arrived with Wolfred, whose pallid cheek and hollow eye bespoke a catalogue of crimes, and the oppression that hang over them. Ethelbald taking one of his hands, and placing *his* other on his shoulder, bade the attendants quit the hall, and began a fearful conversation.

Adeliza was all this time in her chamber, attended by Patelina; not the apart-

ment that had been entered by the ruffians, she would not adventure there again, nor had she slept since without her attendant, besides a guard to parade the gallery.

"Well, Lady Adéliza," proceeds the girl in waiting; "for *my* part, I am always in spirits, except when it thunders and lightens, then I am alarmed *prodigiously!* it makes me feel all over in a *kind of a sort of a way,* I don't know how—that is, a sort of a——oh, dear! it lightens again: then this weather gives me the head-ach, and makes me giddy and dizzy, and——"

"I think you are giddy enough at all times, Patelina," returns Adeliza.

"Yes, I am, truly so;" she replies. "Holy father, protect us! was there ever such thunder as this; it has almost made me faint—my heart goes *pit-a-pat, pit-a-*

*pat*, and my breath is almost stopped."

"It's more than your tongue is, my girl."

"Truly so, Lady, it does not prevent my talking; for *my* talking is not like *your's; I talk* a great deal *more than I think*, and you *think* a great deal *more than you talk;* and as too much *thinking* this weather makes one melancholy, *talking prevents thinking*, and keeps us out of *the mopes:*—there! it lightens again."

"You should endeavour to think seriously at other times," interrupts Adeliza, "on the wonderful works of the great Creator, and the powerful operations of his hand, and to walk agreeable to his laws in this world; that would fortify you against such temporary fear, and prepare your soul for eternity."

"Yes, Lady—(oh, how it thunders again!)—When you do talk it is *some-*

*how, as I may say*, so much to the purpose. Father Ambrose never said half so many good things to me, though he is *what we call* a holy man."

"Holiness, Patelina, cannot consist in a name, an outward appearance, a deligated power abused; but a will to become acceptable in the favour of heaven, an inward and spiritual grace."

To return to the hall.——Ethelbald, such was his weight of remorse for the murder of Gunilda, he had purposed (by way of relieving his troubled soul in some degree), a confession of that, and other misdeeds, to Father Ambrose; but whatever compunction Wolfred might have felt he strongly inveighed against *such weakness.*

Ethelbald spoke of their past loves, the sweetness of her temper, and the perfections of her mind, before the events for which they had consigned her to so

direful an end; all of which the wretched brother ridiculed, and the Earl urging a confession again, he spurned at his cowardice, and broke away, once more summoning courage to walk on the parapet—he was immediately followed by the Earl.

In a short time Wolfred returned, and assembling some of the vassals again in the hall, began to give directions in favour of the Earl, who, from the fever of his conscience and the violent war of the elements, was at last wrought up to a convulsive frenzy beyond subjection.—Whilst he was speaking, Ethelbald (who had broken from those with whom he was left) rushed down through the portal amongst them.

Horror sat upon his pallid cheek; and the cold dew dropped from his forehead; he raved, and at each turn his hair "did

rise and stir as life were in it," so powerfully did imagination operate.

> "Whilst each strain'd ball of the sight seemed bursting from his head!"

"Where shall I fly?" he cries in tones that spoke the agony he felt; "where hide me to escape the terrors of this awful night?—Where is Wolfred, where is my brother? why did he not stay to witness the dreadful vision that passed before, as the red lightning gilded its appearance? he had an equal hand in the deed—the bloody deed!—Ha! there she is again—avaunt! I see, I know it all. Why clad in terrors do you come to haunt, and with that hollow eye and wo-fraught visage remind me of my crimes? Ah! now she's pointing at her bruised frame; the frame that once was spotless, delicate, and pure! now it presents a

bruised figure, and besmeared with blood!"

Wolfred was greatly alarmed at what the distracted Earl had uttered, but recovering, cautioned the domestics not to harbour a thought on the subject derogatory to his honour or their Lord's, affirming he knew, on the contrary, the most poignant grief for the loss of Gunilda was the cause of his extravagance.

The domestics bowed assent, though they were still at liberty to use their own pleasure.

"Enough, enough!" he yet goes on. "There! there! the ruffian's dagger pierced her through; it was not I that struck that blow. Aye, aye! I see—beneath that gentle breast that oft has been my pillow!—O, Heavens! why did I suffer it?—Now she weeps, and now she shakes her head—Ha! how the blood

streams from the gaping orifice as the tears mix with it, and trickle down her sweet body to the ground: where is my brother, where is Wolfred? Let him behold this sight, and then sleep quiet if he can."

"You perceive again," remarks Wolfred, "how wild his words, his looks, and actions are, and no inference can or must be drawn from the language of one so far departed from himself."

"Ha! she retires!" he exclaims. "I'll follow her, she forbids me; she kisses her hand to me---she weeps again: still I must follow—again she waves me back. Troops of shining spirits assemble to convey her hence. Oh, God of mercy! what is it in flaming letters I behold gleaming above her head---'*Gunilda was innocent!* Lost, lost to eternity'!!"

With these words he sunk exhausted into the attendants' arms, and was by the

direction of Wolfred conveyed to his chamber; who was so much disconcerted he knew not what to think or how to act. But the tempest abating, he retired to his couch, resolved before sleep should close his eyes to determine on what plan he would further proceed; and the castle was shortly after buried in silence.

## CHAP. XI.

"Where am I?—What has happened?"

CUMBERLAND.

"——————I'm settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat."

SHAKSPEARE.

"Yes, by the Gods! I could to atoms tear,
Confound mankind, and all the world—but her."

LANSDOWN.

WOLFRED arose early in the morning, and walked forth into the garden. By his uneven step, sudden pause, lowering brow, and quivering lip, that was every moment caught betwixt his teeth; it might have been perceived his bosom was

pregnant with some most terrible intention.

The Earl awoke towards the afternoon in a state of the most shocking languor and debility; his whole system was relaxed in the extreme, and on Wolfred's paying him a visit, in the presence of several domestics, he appeared lost to almost all that had occurred.

This, in some measure, silenced the suspicions that had gone abroad through the castle, and Wolfred devised a contrivance that would prevent the Earl from committing himself thus again.

He informed Adeliza of Ethelbald's indisposition, and she now for the first time since his departure began to inquire after the fate of Florimund.

"Florimund is safe enough, my fair creature," he replies; "but wherefore tease me of him? Is he then the Adonis

of your wishes? I thought you would have waited the event of the Earl's death (which must happen much sooner than you expect), and so become mistress of all I may possess, notwithstanding your father's harsh injunctions to the contrary."

"Oh, fie! my Lord; think you I could disobey a dying parent's injunctions. It would ill become any one to think of loving me after such conduct; indeed, I should expect the ashes of the departed to rise in judgment against me."

"Absurd!---Wherefore do you let such ridiculous ideas and foolish superstition prevail over you? why shut out those pleasures your heavenly form was sent hither to enjoy, when the cup that contains them stands full before you? Whilst I behold those eyes. that rising bosom, those pouting lips, those lovely dimples, and think

how they are secluded from the transport themselves create, I am lost in wonder, in amazement!"

Adeliza sought to retire from his presence, but he prevented her.

"Nay, hear me farther," he continues. "You cannot wish to remain here after what has lately occurred to you---after the lamentable death of Gunilda---and more the dangers that may attend the present unsettled state of the Earl's mind. Though I would not be hasty in my conclusions as to the sudden departure of my beloved sister, still I cannot help entertaining a suspicion---but let that rest."

"Ha! suspicion of what?"

"No matter; on that head let me be silent: but I would advise you as a friend (abandoning the title of a lover for the present) to retire for a few weeks to the old and ruinous, but *hospitable* castle I

possess, under sufferance of the superabundance of my wealthy but afflicted brother."

"Were I inclined to take shelter, in the hour of jeopardy, under *your hospitable roof*, as you have been pleased *yourself* to term it, how could I do so with safety to myself, after what you just now advised in contradiction to an expiring father's directions?"

"Though I burn with desire for her now, the attempt, I fear, would be but to ruin all, and destroy the wished for happiness in the bud," whispers the treacherous Wolfred to himself. Then turning to her—"Nay, *that*, my fair Adeliza, you must overlook; it was the ardent impulse of the moment, nor was I assured till now you were attached to the stripling Florimund; but since I find it is so, the better way to dispose of my affection will be to aid you in the pursuit

of one with whom you may enjoy true happiness, rather than compel you to an union with myself whom I now clearly perceive you cannot love."

"Aid me in the pursuit of one with whom I may enjoy true happiness! Can you mean it, my Lord?"

"Have I not said so?"

"My Lord, could I believe you to be sincere—Oh, tell me, where is Florimund?"

"Believe me so, and listen, Adeliza. Convinced as I was of Florimund's honour and innocence, and fearing the consequences of the Earl's displeasure, I engaged to befriend him, which he very thankfully accepted, and took flight with my follower Barbold the very night. He is now waiting my return to rescue his injured honour, and still further befriend him agreeable to promise. Little does he think of the tragic horrors that await

us here. No more, Adeliza; confide in me, and let us fly and raise him from his despondency."

"Dare, dare I believe this?"

"How can you *doubt* it; sure none but Adeliza *dare* do that. 'Tis Adeliza I admire; 'tis Florimund I respect, and both would I befriend."

"But, oh! think on the lost, the revered Gunilda."

"For her we may weep, and her perfections we may still bear in mind; but all our sorrow never can restore her. Should circumstances bring to light the wretches who—but let us no longer dwell on so fearful a subject. Here resolve at once to accompany me to the walls of Sullenbourn."

"What shall I do?" says she, hesitating; "there's danger in my departure; and after what I have lately witnessed, there is equal danger in remaining here.

But then, my Lord, what will be thought of my elopement from the guardianship of the Earl, to whom my father had consigned me?"

"The guardianship of the Earl! absurd. How can he longer remain your guardian, who cannot be the guardian longer of his own faculties? Think on that: besides, know you not you are every day in danger from the fury of ungoverned transition? and it has been generally found that all, like him possessed, have sought the destruction of those first who were at other times dearest to their bosoms! think on that, Adeliza, think on that."

The fair one at last consented to accompany Wolfred to his castle, on condition her maid Patelina might be allowed to attend her, escorted by some male domestic they would win over to their cause. To this Wolfred very willingly gave his assent.

Ethelbald, who had at length staggered from his couch, leaning on the shoulders of two of his vassals, now entered the apartment, which, for the present, put an end to their discourse. "My child," said he to Adeliza feebly, "I know you pity me—Do you not feel for my loss? Do you not feel for your own? I know you do; but least reflection should again overpower my imagination, and drive me to extremes not only painful but alarming to your gentle bosom, let me entreat of you to leave me awhile with my brother here alone."

Adeliza was overcome by the appearance and words of Ethelbald, and unable to make a reply, she curtsied, burst into tears, and retired.

His supporters having seated the Earl in a large chair, and assisted him to whatever he required to aid and support him, were next directed to quit the apartment.

Wolfred was all expectation.

After a pause, and two or three very heavy sighs, Ethelbald raised himself up, and, catching the eye of Wolfred, shook his head mournfully, then seized his artful brother's hand for support, and again paused to recover himself.

The villanous brother, with all that duplicity ascribed to the monster of the Nile, turned aside and wept.

"Nay, weep not, my brother," now lisped the conscience-struck victim, "it is in vain; the barbarous deed is perpetrated, and never shall I again be able to support these heart-rending reflections.—Oh, Wolfred! never till now did I pray for death to ease my troubled soul; but as it is, how welcome would it be to me!"

"Away with these reflections, my Lord," returns Wolfred, "and think upon your wrongs."

"Ah! there you say again; but still when I think on the revenge I have taken---oh! it was too much! Better I had reported to the world her dishonour, and banished her for ever from my sight."

"What, like the summer fly, to gad from flower to flower, and sting the tortured eye with open letchery."

"That rouses me again—but oh, how brief the satisfaction—when I think on the malady that seizes me in return."

"There it is—and much I fear your weakness will prove our ruin—do you remember any thing of the circumstance that yesterday transpired?—before your domestics you told me you did not—but I crave your pardon for touching on the subject."

"Oh, no, you need not—I would not be thought so insufficient even if it were so. Wolfred, I remember a confused

mass of circumstances, but every thing unconnected—or perhaps my imagination might have gone astray even from what has since struck on my recollection—it was as a broken dream of commixed passions and exploits—sights that at one moment filled me with hope and joy; and the next, chilled me with horror no tongue can describe. Ha! again like the poison of the tarantula, it rushes through my veins—see there—see there—the flaming truth again, '*Gunilda was innocent!*'"

As the Earl uttered these last words, he started from his seat, but overpowered by energy and apprehension, sank senseless back again, from which situation (by the direction of Wolfred) he was again borne to his chamber.

Our readers may once more behold Wolfred—that demon of darkness—that monster of diabolical invention and evil

deeds pacing with conscious satisfaction the apartment *alone*, and indulging in the most hellish contrivances to effect a deed like that which in the beginning called down on itself in thunders, the primeval curse! Gold and possessions were what he worshipped; ambition was the pillar of his soul; and his desire for Adeliza was not that of love, but the fever of a desperate propensity. He conceived the death of Ethelbald, his brother, would secure to him all these, and he was determined to effect it as soon as possible.

"This night," he mutters, "shall the deed be done! I have in a great measure won Adeliza to my purposes—at least to my care, and that shall enforce my every wish of *her*—the magnanimity of Ethelbald's mind is overthrown and in *his* death do I become successor, and lord of all his possessions! As for the boy Florimund, *he* shall not long survive to

tell me I have a rival, but on his destruction, will I lay the foundation of my happiness with Adeliza. First let me become owner of this castle: but then—to avoid a suspicion of the deed being my own—let me consider—I have it—his own dagger shall perform the work—and for the rest it's here—the brain that is brooding now, shall also bear the reflection, when it is done!

## CHAP. XII.

"So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange
Thou interposest; that my sudden hand
Prevented, spares to tell thee yet by deeds
What it intends."

MILTON.

"A man so near me arm'd and mask'd!"

LILLO.

TERROR and dismay reigned through the gloomy chambers of Ethelbald, and grief sat in every eye for the loss of Gunilda; fear gave birth to superstition, as it originated itself from grief; and super-

stition produced a thousand *wonders* never before observed.

The battlements of the different towers had been seen to rock—the martlet dropped dead at their foundation—the raven perched her in the darkest nook—fires appeared in the air—and forms unusual shewed themselves in the nightly blaze around which the vassals regaled themselves before they retired to rest. The cry of turiloo was more frequent at the gate, yet no mendicant to be seen—lights were observed in those parts of the castle seldom or ever visited—and some went as far as to say they had witnessed supernatural appearances.

"For my part," says Patilina, "I've always been afraid of *seeing* something *invisible* ever since the death of our worthy lady—heaven bless her for a good

sweet soul! and I would not meet a ghost or an apparition or *anybody* of that *kind* for the world, I'm sure I should go off as *dead* as a *shooting* star. Holy Mary preserve us!"

"Away with your fears," cries Harold, "I have lived many years—fought a few battles—seen some dark nights, and met with many a rough customer, but never encountered any thing more ghostly or invisible than myself."

"What, not when you have met with me," replies Gerald, "lack-a-day—since I've been troubled with these shooting pains I've fallen away to a shadow, saying nothing about a skeleton—why you may see through me—you might blow me away—I've no flesh at all—I'm all bones!"

"And yet you often want to kiss me, so you do Gerald, adds a female vassal in

the corner, "but I do not like being hugged by a bundle of old bones."

"Ha! ha! ha! *old* bones indeed! I did not say my bones were *old*. I said 'I was all bones;' but let me tell you there's marrow in them yet, for all that. As for ghosts, or spirits, or hobgoblins, I *neither believe or disbelieve* any thing about them; I've never seen one yet, and I hope I never shall."

"That's very right," returns a venerable domestic. "*I've* never seen one, but that's no reason but I may sometime; therefore if I don't doubt the *appearance* of what's *invisible*, I shall have less to answer for when I do meet with a spirit."

"Ha! ha! ha!" burst forth from one of the minstrels, entering as the last speech concluded.

"You need not ridicule our grave con-

versation," says the other, (who was sitting with the rest round the fire), "I'll warrant me there are *spirits* in the castle *boni*, and some that will *make their appearance to night too!*"

Thus the conversation went round till they were almost afraid to look behind them, when the minstrel who had just entered informed them all, he had brought a cheering beverage, of which each one was to partake a share, in order to abolish their fears, and this at the request of Adeliza.

At the close of his speech, the other minstrel gave him a look that seemed to indicate, though professors of harmony, they were now laying the ground work of discord. The beverage was distributed freely, not a vassal throughout the castle but partook of it.

Wolfred in the mean time sought an-

other interview with Adeliza, who gave him to understand she had since weighed the propriety of accompanying him more seriously, and must still beg leave to decline the honour he intended her; though for Florimund's sake she would have risked any thing consistent with her own honour. Wolfred in return informed her, Florimund was his prisoner, and his life depended on her compliance; this at once put an end to any further hesitation on the subject, Adeliza also saw the miscreant she had to encounter, and seemingly complied.

Preparations were directed by Wolfred to Adeliza, for their secret departure in the course of a few days, and amongst other things he placed a sealed packet in her hands, of which he made her vow especial care till he should require it of her again. He might trust her with that now, he observed, since he had *sealed*

*her confidence* by the imprisonment of Florimund.

They were now taking leave of each other to retire to rest—the diabolical inclinations of Wolfred scarcely permitted him to leave her without an attempt to gratify them, even at the hazard of all the alarm and confusion it might occasion through the castle. Suddenly he recollected he was in want of something the packet he had given Adeliza contained; he requested it of her again, but would return it, he said, on the following morning.

Adeliza restored it, and courtesying very low, shuddered and retired.

Wolfred's eye followed her to the door, which was no sooner closed, than his countenance changed to the most horrible and malicious grin, that seemed to threaten destruction to every thing that opposed him; then looking cautiously

round him, in great agitation he hastily tore open the packet, as Barbold his follower announced himself in waiting at the door.

"You are punctual, my brave fellow, from the lowering towers of Sullenbourn," he exclaims, as he commanded him to enter the room. Barbold appeared, having just alighted from his journey; the darkness of the night and his countenance seemed very well to accord: he might have been received as a relative of Appollyon clad in Saxon costume.

"How left you your prisoner?" enquires Wolfred.

"Alive," replies the fellow, "and that is as much as I can say; but as no one knows where he is but myself, and I did not wish all at once to be deprived of the agreeable music of his cries, I left him

three day's provision; if he devours it all the first, and starves afterwards, that is his fault."

"'Tis well; are you prepared to attend me?"

"To be sure I am, in any thing, or what brought me here?—yet stay my Lord; though I do not altogether fear danger, I wish to know before hand what I am going about; for I do not see any great deal of courage there is in a man's throwing his life away headlong."

"Truly, not," returns Wolfred, "then follow me. I'll give you the necessary instructions—here we may be surprised—and to use your own phrase, we'll be 'slow and sure.'" Thus ending, in a mysterious manner, they made to the door and disappeared.

Ethelbald, recovering on his couch, had

sent for his faithful domestic Harold to attend him, and given particular directions for every vassal on duty to keep careful watch, so strange and commixed were his fears.

"I have named to you every secret pannel, avenue, and subterraneous passage of my castle, and it is only now for your fidelity to secure me when I cannot protect myself. Let a guard be set upon them."

"Doubt not, my Lord," replies the domestic.

"If they are safely taken care of we have nothing to fear, yet still such magic and mystery has prevailed of late, it seems almost to have been conducted by the aid of some supernatural power."

"Let us still hope, my Lord, all will be right at last."

"It is too late to hope for any good in this world," he muttered with a sigh;

"but away with the light, and betake yourself to rest; as my brother sleeps in the next chamber you need not secure the door of this apartment, for I must trouble him, should I feel myself indisposed during the night."

Harold took up the lamp, and bowing respectfully, quitted the room.

All was darkness, save when the moon broke from behind the sable curtain of the west, and shot her watery ray through the arched and lofty casement on the couch of the distressed Earl. Silence reigned through the castle, and Ethelbald was seeking to offer up a prayer of mercy to that being who alone can reconcile the guilty conscience, and give us perfect happiness at last. But so dreadfully burthensome were his reflections, and so severe the recollection of the crime he had lately committed, all his efforts were ineffectual—he could not pray!

Wolfred now sought admission, to be permitted to watch by the Earl; his brother, if he found himself the least likely to experience further indisposition; this Ethelbald consented to; and, after taking some kind of mixture composed by the friar Ambrose to act as a soporific, he reclined to rest.

After the exchange of a few melancholy observations, the nostrum began to operate most powerfully on the Earl, notwithstanding the weight of his criminality, or rather what he had been ensnared into, and he sank into a sound sleep.

Wolfred took up the lamp, passed the light two or three times across the Earl's eyes, shewed signs he was convinced he was asleep, and stole softly out of the apartment.

The moon suddenly disappeared, and in exchange an awful flash of the heavens

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

opened to the touch of some midnight visitor, who, wrapped in a dark rough mantle, now stood before him.

Ethelbald (though he in battle had laughed at fear) from his present weak state, and the terrific appearance of the stranger, had neither the power of speech, or that of defending himself, against what was about to happen, but seemed rather to resign himself a victim to his fate.

On a signal from this dark assassin, a second, enveloped like himself, followed, and having nearly closed the door, glided softly round, and placed himself in a concealed posture behind the curtain at the head of the couch, whereon lay the terror-struck Earl. He next took from beneath his cloak a lamp, and holding it up that the other might have a correct view of the object on whom he was employed to place the blow, the villain advanced, covering the greater part of his face by

raising the mantle on his left arm, and just as he had lifted the poniard on his right, that would have silenced his victim for ever, a loud voice as from the throat of Stentor, assailed their ears: it arrested their purpose, and as they extinguished the lamp, and concealed themselves as well as they could behind the bed, three other figures of more confidence stalked into the chamber.

"Ho!" repeats the foremost, "at length I have found you! (Lights! lights! my followers.) Awake! arise, and view your mortal foe!"

His two companions, by some secret application, illuminated the chamber with an immediate light from their torches.

What was the Earl's surprise when, on recovering sufficiently to start up on his couch, he beheld his unknown enemy, the man in the Iron Mask!

"Be not alarmed," he cries, "I do

not come to dispatch you here under your own roof, that would be inhospitable murder, but to take you back again to our own, where I can make myself better known to you, and exult in the great revenge I seek. You were pleased to escape, but you find I am now about to have you once more in my power!"

"What, ho! help! help!" exclaims the Earl.

"Pshaw! pshaw!" returns the concealed monster, "in vain you call—the whole castle is under my subjection; therefore prepare, you, and your artful follower to accompany me to our new habitation—Arise I say;" here catching Ethelbald by the throat, he was in the act of dragging him forth, when one of the others, from the motion of the curtain, perceived the assassins that had concealed themselves.

"Captain, beware!" vociferates one; "we are watched in the dark!"

The other two, on the instant, rushed forth with a view to solicit for quarter; but were attacked and compelled to defend themselves, which they did in so masterly and determined a manner, as to succeed in driving the others from the chamber—this gave the Earl time and strength to arise and conceal himself behind a sliding pannel of the wainscot.

The castle bell now rung violently—loud and confused was the noise, and clashing of swords below; after a few seconds it ceased, and all again was still; as the man in the iron mask, bearing a flaming torch, with his sword drawn and bloody, again returned to the apartment.

"Ha! by hell!" he exclaims, "the object of my mortal spleen has escaped;

and nothing but his fetid couch remains—would I had sent him to a lasting sleep, before he had fled his resting place. But no time is to be lost; the alarm of the castle bell will arouse the vassals, and we shall be obstructed on our return, though the affrighted slave is silenced that dared in fear create the noise. The girl is no where to be found—the unknown mis-creants concealed here are ours, and shall feel the weight of my vengeance—again to dreary sullenness I leave the dark and pompous abode of him who one day must receive a recompense for all the wrongs he has done me." This said, he again absented himself.

The storm, that from the loud peal of thunder had threatened at the beginning of this affray, passed off in unusual stillness, and after a considerable pause of silence, the horn at the castle gate began to sound. By this time Adeliza, who

"Captain, beware!" vociferates one, "we are watched in the dark!"

The other two, on the instant, rushed forth with a view to solicit for quarter, but were attacked and compelled to defend themselves, which they did in so masterly and determined a manner, as to succeed in driving the others from the chamber—this gave the Earl time and strength to arise and conceal himself behind a sliding pannel of the wainscot.

The castle bell now rung violently—loud and confused was the noise, and clashing of swords below; after a few seconds it ceased, and all again was still; as the man in the iron mask, bearing a flaming torch, with his sword drawn and bloody, again returned to the apartment.

"Ha! by hell!" he exclaims, "the object of my mortal spleen escaped;

"Alas! poor Harold," sighed Ethelbald, "he is no more! Doubtless by the general silence that reigns here, most of my domestics have shared the same fate; by the last speech of the leader of these besiegers they are all fled by this time, but let us hasten to the gate and admit those whose fealty has brought them hither to rescue us."

The vassals having obtained access, and learned the cause of the alarm, they, with Ethelbald and Adeliza, adjourned immediately to the hall; how was their astonishment multiplied to find the lamps burning, and every domestic in the various attitude of his employ in sound sleep, as if wrought so by the power of magic—the words of the being in the iron mask instantly occurred to the owner of the place. "*In vain you call, the whole castle is under my subjection.*"

The Earl was perplexed to learn how they could find the way into the castle. Wolfred was no where to be found—it was supposed the banditti had made him prisoner.

Harold (the first that awoke from this miraculous sleep, *save the two minstrels*) had by this time again lighted his lamp by another on the stairs near him; and was in readiness after the surprise at what had happened, to attend the Earl and his humble followers.

One, not so powerfully overcome by this extraordinary visit of Somnus, had flown to the castle bell, and given the alarm—but had there been overtaken by the wrath of the banditti, and fell a victim to its fury. Those on the watch, at first imagined dead, were only asleep, as were all the domestics of the pile, to the no small astonishment of their rescuers.

This could no other way have been promoted than by the efficacy of the beverage so industriously distributed by the minstrel!

## CHAP. XIII.

——————" As we often see,
A silence in the heav'ns, the wreck stand still,
The bold winds speechless, and the orb below
As hush as death."

SHAKSPEARE.

THE Towers of Ravenswold were again the habitation of a fearful s lence: not a domestic, when he heard what had transpired during his repose, but was pleased he had thus quietly escaped.

Suspicion, in some measure, fell on the minstrels, but as the beverage that had been distributed was supposed to come from Adeliza, she was too much beloved to be questioned on the matter, and no one thought fit to address the Earl in the uneven state of his mind; so all contented themselves in having come off so well.

The last that awoke and made his appearance was father Ambrose. He was by no means spare, nor did he ever mortify his carnal appetites to become so; though he recommended fasting to others, it was feasting he preferred himself, which might plainly be seen by the glowing countenance he exhibited. He was seldom seen counting his beads, though he appeared fond of playing with those of almost every female domestic. *Sackcloth*, for the sake of an external appearance,

it is true, he would sometimes wear, but all his ashes were coals. He never confessed himself, but was ever listening to the confessions of Patelina; she was his darling. He was jocose, when awake, but very much given to slumber; the thoughts of limbo never troubled him, nor did the affairs of the hereafter alarm him; and whatever might be the event of all these things, it seemed a most peculiar pleasure to him, whenever occasion offered itself, to be laying fast hold of his share of the blessings of this world.

"So," he begins, "I have heard of the confusion that has prevailed, and glad am I to find you are all alive.—You see what a wholesome thing it is to be under the care of a good shepherd—you are all my sheep, you know; I am your shepherd, and the wolf dare not touch you

when I am by. Had you been without a shepherd they had devoured you all; but as it is, you are safe. When you are folded, under my care, the ravenous monsters no more dare to harm any one of you, than wolves do to leap into the arms of those who hunt them in the forest."

"Ha, ha, ha. You our shepherd—all safe too, forsooth—you mistake, father Ambrose," says Gerald. "Ha, ha, ha—I call you father, but I believe I am old enough to be your grandfather—must have my little joke, though I am old.—All safe too, forsooth!—We are not all safe, for one poor fellow, it seems, has been tolling his own knell."

"Ha! one of the flock dead, say you? A stray sheep, no doubt. Well, well, we cannot live for ever; but you are alive, I see, my little Patelina."

"I scarcely know whether I am or not, father," she replies. "I have been almost frightened out of my senses."

"Well, holy father," says Harold, "I must leave you without a blessing, after this extraordinary alarm. The Earl requires my presence, and that of the whole castle will be wanted, I expect, this morning. He deems it no longer prudent to remain here, but to fly to the court of our good king, Edmund Ironside, for protection."

"Ha, ha, ha, what say you to that, father Ambrose?" inquires Gerald; "the Earl no longer means to trust himself in your fold, though you may be a very heavenly shepherd, he seems rather to prefer the protection of his earthly king. Oh, my shooting pains!——must have my little joke, though I am old."

"Aye, aye," continues the Friar, "all

these troubles arise out of your abominable lusts---you don't mortify your execrable sins.---Oh, you are a little rogue, Patelina. I say you do not fast and pray as you ought to do. Is it not near breakfast time?-----You are a set of prophane wretches, and what can you expect?---All your deeds are evil, I tell you again, ---oh, you wicked little rogue, Patelina.---Yes, I say, all your deeds are evil.---You nickname each other, you swear, you gorge, and drink till you blow yourselves up like a bladder---give me a chair, I can scarcely bear the weight of my own flesh when I exert myself in reprobating your atrocious abominations.----What can you expect; but I would have you beware, or I'll put you all under penance."

"You will not put me under penance, I hope, father," inquires Patelina."

"Silence, you little rogue, silence," replies he winking, and putting his finger

to his nose that was covered over with carbuncles, "What can you expect, I say? —I say, what can you all expect?—Why, how you stand and laugh, and grin, and frown, and gape, and stare, after the terrible judgment that has fallen upon you. Yes, and you will all fall yourselves, if you do not have a care, I say, the weight of your sins will crush you." At that moment the chair in which he was sitting broke under him, and he fell backwards, but was soon lifted on his legs by those around.

"Well," he concludes, "I shall not stay to harangue you any longer this time; all of you follow me, and let us sing a Te Deum."

The shepherd then quitted the hall, and all the sheep followed him.

The Earl and Harold were now closeted together in earnest conversation.

"How say you, Harold, the ebony

chamber, near the north tower, haunted?"

"So it is understood, my Lord, several of your vassals have observed lights there at unusual hours, and none will venture, for fear, towards that part of the castle."

"Be it so. Now, Harold, would I lay open to you my soul. I think I may in confidence, after your past fidelity; but, first swear by all the good you may hope for, here and hereafter, never to divulge."

Harold complied.

Ethelbald then laid open his late guilty proceedings, with piercing energy. Harold seemed greatly affected by the Earl's confession, and could have offered much in behalf of those he supposed the injured party; but finding the Earl already overburthened with affliction, declined making

the slightest comment, and rather sought to console him.

The Earl continued,—"If the spirit of those departed be allowed again to visit us—if the wretch (whose hands, like mine, are crimsoned o'er with blood) can again be tortured with the bleeding presence of those we suppose are sent headlong into another world, where will my wretchedness end? I cannot hope for happiness here, nor ever dare I expect it in heaven hereafter. Where can I turn for comfort?----Alas! I am a miserable outcast, thrust naked into the storm; and look where I will there is no place to shelter me. If I turn that way the red lightning darts upon my sight, to avoid which, if I look downwards on my mother earth, the awful thunder rouses me from my lethargy---the piercing winds rush through my frame exposed, and the heavy weight of waters fall upon my head---murder my

wife!—all nature shudders as I pronounce the deed, and, that she will not hear it again re-echoed, buries it from her startled ear, within her hollow cavities an hundred fathoms down."

"Take comfort, my Lord," says Harold.

"Comfort, good Harold! Comfort! Oh, where is it to be found?"

"I have always understood, my Lord, there was a comfort in confession."

"Ha! say you so?"

"Father Ambrose will have it so; though I do not gather my authority from him."

"Well, well, my faithful fellow, I do believe there is what you assert; for I feel a great deal of the pressure that was hanging on my mind relieved by what I have now revealed to you. Though you are not a priest, whose life is consecrated to profession, surely, goodness must ac-

knowledge, as consecrated, the upright heart and pure."

"Fear not, my Lord."

"Well, Harold, as you have set me on the business of making atonement every way in my power for the deed I have committed, another thought occurs to me.

"Should the chamber of ebony be the altar of reparation to the wounded spirit of Gunilda, (for who knows but there her ghost still haunts, to watch my fleeting actions here on earth), should it, I say, be the altar of reparation it is there I would offer up a written confession, prayer of oblivion, and every other thing relating to and concerned with that most horrible transaction, the murder of my dearest wife. This do I wish to be secretly bestowed there by your friendly hand, if you have the courage to perform what I would

have; and this must be done unknown to all but you—pronounce, when you have performed this, a prayer for my afflicted soul. Then shall the door, by you, be sealed and secured, and orders issued through the castle, that no one enter it again. If there her spirit wanders, this may perhaps appease it; and with repentance and concession, in the end bring some comfort to a wounded murderer's bosom."

Harold engaged immediately to fulfil the Earl's request, as he was not swayed by superstition, neither was he overpowered by fear.

Ethelbald directly fulfilled what he had proposed, and gave it sealed into the hands of Harold. "Away, my good fellow," he concludes, "and may heaven with your absence and this packet, hear my prayers and deliver me, as far as can

be hoped, from the remembrance of the past, except it be for the exercise of my endeavours for forgiveness. I cannot attempt to justify myself; but if my wife were innocent, good God! how have I been deceived!!"

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

J. G. BARNARD, SKINNER-STREET, LONDON.

THE

# TOWERS

OF

# RAVENSWOLD,

&c. &c.

THE

# TOWERS

OF

# RAVENSWOLD;

OR,

# DAYS OF IRONSIDE.

*A ROMANCE.*

BY

WILLIAM HENRY HITCHENER,
*OF THE SURRY THEATRE:*
AUTHOR OF ST. LEONARD'S FOREST, *&c.*

"On horror's head, horrors accumulate."
SHAKESPEARE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

*LONDON:*
PRINTED FOR C. CHAPPLE,
PALL MALL.

1813.

J. G. BARNARD,
*Skinner-Street, London.*

THE

# TOWERS OF RAVENSWOLD,

*&c. &c.*

## CHAP. I.

"Tell
Me, ye who can and have your senses free;
Or, are you all indeed, like me, struck through
With wonder too?"

SOUTHERN.

"See where it goes! even now; out at the portal!"

SHAKSPEARE.

HAROLD immediately executed the Earl's orders, nor did he return void of some agitation, arising from what he had

experienced in his visit to the ebony chamber; the very name of which became a terror, not only to the domestics of the castle, but likewise to the vassals around.

The Earl eagerly questioned Harold the cause of his alarm, and what he had seen; this he refused to answer, alleging, he would afford such reasons at a future period, as would convince the Earl of the propriety of his conduct.

Alarmed and perplexed as was Ethelbald, at this time, he would not suffer any of his vassals to quit the castle, and yet he remained in as much fear of treachery amongst them as he did of the assailants. Such were his fears, he declined going into any formal investigation, but resolved on immediately flying to London to solicit protection of Edmund; as the present was not an open enemy he had to resist,

but one that stole upon him obscurely like a thief in the night.

Preparations were soon made, and the Earl set out for the metropolis, escorted by a numerous body guard; having previously fortified the castle in the best manner possible. Adeliza avoided accompanying him, having resolved to trust herself to the mercy of Providence; half determined, should an opportunity offer itself, to go forth in search of Florimund.

It is strange to relate, that soon after Furbaud and his party had arrived at their new residence (a cavern, connected with the other by a subterraneous passage ingeniously contrived, with others that branched to the white cliffs of the channel, to aid an escape in case of surprise,) Wolfred and the robber were on the most intimate footing.

They, by some means, gained intelligence of Ethelbald's departure, and anxi-

ous to know the event of his application to the king, they set forth in disguise, attended by Barbold and about half a dozen of the banditti, resolved, when they reached the metropolis, to learn in secret all that might transpire.

Adeliza, soon after the absence of the Earl, began to ruminate on the best way she could commence an expedition in quest of him she so much loved, whom Wolfred had acknowledged was his prisoner, and who might, perhaps, never have the means of escaping with his life now the tyrant and his follower were in the custody of the man in the iron mask.

She feared to relate to the Earl the conduct he had shewn her, dreading the consequences might fall heavy in return on the life of Florimund; had she done that, it must have raised suspicions in the mind of Ethelbald, he had as yet been a stranger to

The castle of Sullenbourn, the residence of Wolfred, was situated on an eminence, in Wiltshire, surrounded by low marshy lands, encompassed by rude mountains, craggy declivities, woods, and so forth. It had been several times besieged during the Saxon wars, and great part of it, (through the neglect of Ethelbald, and Wolfred's inability to repair it,) was in a state of ruin and decay. It formed the picture of a dark and rude structure sinking, rather under the weight of event, than time, as it was only founded soon after the Saxons began to establish themselves in England, on the invitation of Vortigern, against the Scots and Picts, which was very little more than five hundred years previous.

As Adeliza was contriving how she could break the state of her mind to s me one who might assist her on her journey

thither, as well as direct her on the way, she wandered by chance, from one chamber to another, into that lately occupied by the Earl's brother. Casting her eye round, as she reflected on the man, and all the mystery and calamity that accompanied him, she suddenly espied something that had been thrust hastily into a nook of the wainscot: it immediately struck her as the very packet he had given into her care and afterwards withdrawn. Suspecting his treachery, she immediately snatched it forth, and, agreeable to her expectations, so it proved; the packet had doubtless been placed there in the confusion that had lately prevailed, as a corroboration of which, it was now unsealed.

The first thing that struck her, was an epistle of rather rude construction, addressed to Wolfred, by his rugged follower Barbold, and ran as follows:

"*My noble Lord and Master,*

"As you have always found me the man for any *desperate job*, so I have *managed the matter* just as you commanded. The stripling that dared pretend to rival you has now obtained the reward of his presumption. I have lodged him in the *strong hole* of the western *tower*, that hangs over the ditch, and threatened him with immediate death, if he causes any alarm. I did not take him down into the cavern, as I thought you might like to have the *agreeable satisfaction* of shewing him the way there yourself. I am keeping him low as you directed me, and it seems to answer the purpose you wished, but he charges you with treachery, and says I am *an infernal cut-throat scoundrel*—he'll talk less as he finds less to support his stomach. This information *my messenger* will deliver to Rolfe,

who is in your pay, and from whose hands you will obtain it. If you need my presence again, *say so* by the return of the former, and you will soon find me yours at command.

"BARBOLD."

"Ha! it is plain," she observes to herself, "this epistle alludes to the imprisonment of Florimund—perhaps even now he is pining in a dungeon's gloom without even common sustenance! Rolfo too in league with the machinations of the monster Wolfred! but he has met the reward of his villany, having fallen a victim at the castle bell whilst tolling the alarm. Surely," said she, "the Earl's brother must be concerned with the mysterious visitors that have so disturbed our peace—and still, the death of this fellow, and the absence of Wolfred, seem to contradict it. A moment must not be

lost at all events, in preparing to find out Florimund."

Adeliza by no means felt herself safe in the castle; she was resolved on adventuring in quest of him she loved, and a circumstance that struck deep into her bosom took place, and forbade her longer to hesitate.

She summoned her maid Patelina to go with her to the oratory. This girl she discovered had once visited the walls of Sullenbourn, attendant on Gunilda. On their arrival at the sacred chamber, Adeliza related every particular, enjoining her maid to secrecy, at the same time solicited her aid.

Patelina betrayed a thousand fears, but promised to abide in secrecy. Adeliza urged their journeying in the disguise of *two pilgrims*; this appearing the safer plan, she consented to accompany her.

"Fly to the wardrobe then," says the fair one, "let us equip ourselves; in the mean time I will offer up a prayer for our safety and success."

Patelina departed to furnish their disguises, and Adelina knelt down in fervent supplication.

The solemn stillness of the place assisted her in devotion, and she felt a kind of conscious return, her prayers were not offered up in vain.

Finding her domestic did not come back so soon as might have been expected, she arose, and was on the point of quitting the place as the sound of music arrested her attention. Turning round to learn from whence it proceeded, she by accident extinguished her lamp, and was now in total darkness.

The music continued; it was as the sound of an instrument touched by some

celestial spirit, afterwards accompanied by a voice to the following effect.

Rest, rest, afflicted spirit rest;
For what does grief avail;
Our life is but a fleeting jest,
Then wherefore weep and wail?
Malignant guilt may lord it for a day,
But innocence in time maintains its sway:
Jubilate!

The lamb becomes the wolf's fell prey,
To suffer here awhile;
The Wolf is slain, and borne away,
The lamb preserv'd from guile:
To adverse guilt an earthly reign is given;
To innocence pre-eminence in heaven.
Jubilate!

The voice was as that of one inspired, its plaintive notes struck on her trembling soul, and she was lost in transport and amazement. What it could mean, or from whom proceed, equally perplex-

ed her. She was half inclined to believe the words were addressed to her, but immediately checked herself for the thought.

All continued silent—she trembled—made another effort to retire, paused again; the solitude of the place and the darkness that enveloped her increased her agitation. She thought she heard footsteps—she again turned to listen, when, what were her feeble efforts to support herself compared with the sight she had to encounter, a door opened on the left, the place became suddenly illuminated by the entrance of a tall female figure, robed to appearance in the most delicate white muslin, but in many parts much stained with blood; she bore in her hand the form of a lamp, and was advancing to raise her veil that the terrified heroine might have a correct view of her features, when the noise of Adeliza's do-

mestic returning, caused her to retire, "like a guilty thing at a fearful summons;" but just as Patelina was entering at the lower end of the apartment, and the vision of the female disappearing at the upper through a door on the right, the veil was gently raised, with a slight inclination of the head, as she vanished. "Almighty powers!" exclaims Adeliza, "*it was the spirit of Gunilda!!*" and sank immediately to the ground.

Patelina arrived just in time to hear the words pronounced, and behold her lady on the floor; but she was greatly alarmed, and her screams brought other domestics to the spot, who proceeded to raise Adeliza.

On her recovery she was silent respecting what overcame her. She felt she could no more sleep under the roof of Ethelbald till she had been in pursuit of Florimund, as such they prepared their dis-

guises; but it was not till the morning they effected their escape, bidding adieu to the horrors and mystery of the Towers of Ravenswold.

## CHAP. II.

"Hence every grief and every anxious care
Mixt with the seas and winds, raise tempests there:
Strike all your strings to joyful measures move,
And every voice sound liberty and love."

LANSDOWN.

"Who is't comes yonder?"

SHAKSPEARE.

"A wandering maid,
Her hair disordered, and her homely dress,
Betray'd her want, and witness'd her distress."

VERNON'S TRANSL. OF OVID.

As some lorn wretch who, for many years, has been shut up in painful durance, escaping her confinement looks on

the world anew, and feels a sudden transport at the returning dawn of life and liberty, so did Adeliza experience a secret happiness when she found she had escaped the walls of Ravenswold, and the dangers that seemed to threaten the castle altogether.

Her follower, or rather companion on her journey to Sullenbourn, was one of those who never bestowed a great deal of serious consideration on any thing, and as this was an expedition that seemed particularly the wish of Adeliza, she now appeared content to accompany her, satisfied within herself they were just as safe abroad as they were at home.

They moved onwards, Patelina directing their course; and she began, after begging pardon for her curiosity, to inquire of our heroine how she escaped a journey with the Earl.

Adeliza replied, she was permitted to

wait the return of Ethelbald under the care of Harold, in whom the Earl placed the most implicit confidence, and he having no suspicion of her flight, their escape had been the more easily effected.

Disguised as pilgrims they journied on without interruption over hills, through vallies, woods, and barren wilds, till coming to a wide extended plain the appearance of a *strange figure at a distance* attracted their attention; it was advancing to meet them, and Adeliza, at the solicitation of her maid, was almost persuaded to return back for shelter.

On consideration of the miraculous manner in which she had hitherto been preserved from harm amidst the dangers that lately threatened the inhabitants of the castle, she condemned her own fears and checked Patelina's solicitations.

the world anew, and feels a sudden transport at the returning dawn of life and liberty, so did Adeliza experience a secret happiness when she found she had escaped the walls of Ravenswold, and the dangers that seemed to threaten the castle altogether.

Her follower, or rather companion on her journey to Sullenbourn, was one of those who never bestowed a great deal of serious consideration on any thing, and as this was an expedition that seemed particularly the wish of Adeliza, she now appeared content to accompany her, satisfied within herself they were just as safe abroad as they were at home.

They moved onwards, Patelina directing their course; and she began, after begging pardon for her curiosity, to inquire of our heroine how she escaped a journey with the Earl.

Adeliza replied, she was permitte

entwined with flowers, and from which were suspended a piece of steel, a large flint, and a bundle of matches; her array altogether was of many colours; and those parts of her flesh that were exposed appeared rather discoloured by the sun's heat than neglect of cleanliness. Her countenance exhibited the marks of many years spent in a labyrinth of derangement, though her features still retained the ruins of transcendent beauty and unusual excellence.

Ye, who boast of fortune, revel in luxury, and deem yourselves secure in this world, beneath the shelter and grandeur of your "*cloud capt towers and gorgeous palaces*," turn hither your averted eyes, and behold in this poor abandoned object how vain a safety the best of you can call your own, even under the roof of the Almighty's "*solemn temples!*" That essence of the omnipotent

spirit which, as it is improved by cultivation raises man above his fellow, and makes him lord of the creation round; that inward man, that can when its giver pleases raise the slave above his oppressor, and prove to him he has one thing left still out of his reach; that immortal structure from which we measure the extent of other's wisdom whilst we improve our own, and find ourselves lifted above the ambition of worldly abundance; and "*even the great globe itself;*" that (whether we be in poverty or affluence, seated on a throne or sheltered under the miserable hovel) *that*, when it is the pleasure of him who called the world out of chaos, and said "let there be light, and there was light," *even that* may be overturned, may be snatched away as "*all that the earth inherit shall dissolve;*" and "*like the baseless fabric of a vision leave not a wreck behind.*"

This digression we beg our readers to excuse. As the poor afflicted wanderer came nearer, she perceived our heroine and her companion, on which she made an immediate stand, paused, and gazed on them for some time, till she broke silence as follows:——

"Ha! what spirits are you that cross me on the fiery way? my path has already been blasted by one of the foul fiends that torment me. Pray, O pray have pity now, for poor Winefred's heart is almost scorched to pieces."

"Fear us not, thou poor afflicted one," returns Adeliza; "rather than aggravate your sufferings we would pour balm into the gaping wounds of your wretchedness, and restore you to yourself."

"Hush!" says she, "I *am* myself; but the evil spirit wants to make me otherwise: he forced me into the *fairy-ring* just now, and what do you think?"

"I cannot guess," replies our heroine.

"You are the wiser because you are not presumptuous.—Well; as I would not listen to his suggestions he condemned me to a *fiery ordeal*—you know my name?—Poor Winefred!"

"I think I have heard of it."

"Oh, yes, yes; every body has heard of me; and they will hear more, aye, and know more, when I have escaped this—you are both good spirits, I hope? You will not harm me?"

"We cannot boast of our goodness," observes Adeliza; "but I hope we are too good to alarm *poor Winefred!*"

"Poor Winefred!" eagerly repeats the wretched wanderer: "yes, that's *me*; every body knows *poor Winefred!* condemned to walk barefoot over five hundred red-hot plough-shares—did you ever see me dance?"—Here she began a va-

riety of attitudes, capers, and gestures; suddenly stopping, she whispers Adeliza, "I have escaped seven hundred and seventy-seven out of the five hundred, and ought to get off safe now in compliment to my good fortune so far: seven, you know, is a lucky number."

"I believe it is," returns our heroine.

"*You* reply to every thing," she hastily remarks. "Why does not the other gentle spirit talk a little?—Ha, you are pilgrim *now* I perceive. Why, where have been my eyes all this time? Hush! he is not coming is he? I hate to look behind me."

Adeliza looked around, and Patelina continued silent.

"Why, surely *this* must be an evil spirit, that it makes no reply? Oh, no; a pilgrim I see again—much mystery under that cloak."

Patelina began to be alarmed; which Adeliza perceiving, made signs to Winefred, with a view to convey to her, Patelina had lost the faculty of speech.

"Oh, I perceive," remarks the wretched outcast; "deprived of his ears, he is obliged to hear with his eyes, see with his tongue, and never speak at all!"

Adeliza bowed assent; then questioned Winefred the cause of her fears just now, and dread of looking behind her?

"My evil follower," she replies; "he is always on the watch, always crossing and tormenting me."

"Fear not, you are safe," our heroine assured her.

"Aye, so they swore when there was not an hair's breadth betwixt me and the loss of honour," she exclaims, (her feelings by chance reminded of some afflicting circumstance.) "They flattered me,

made me believe I was something more than mortal, and that this lower world was all my own!—Sweet, you know my name? *Poor Winefred!*—Hush! if you should see him coming I'll hide me in your cowl, and you may say I am gone by."

"I will; be not alarmed, we'll take care of you."

"Will you? In return I'll give you good council. If you have daughters let them not visit *camps*. Oh! I could tell a tale would make you weep your whole life through, though you might last till doomsday. Ha! now the scorched earth strikes upwards to my heart—this is all the foul fiend's doing! Does not the burning sod destroy your sandals?"

"We do not find it so," was the answer.

"But you will though! Watch him, or he will come upon us by surprise! Hark ye, he once paved my way with *glow worms*, to increase my agony, but was disappointed in that, for some good spirit fought in my behalf, and rendered all their fire ineffectual! Do you not see him coming?"

"No, no, believe me," says our heroine, "come, be patient, sit you down and let us hear the story of your sufferings." Then turning to Patelina, "I am to blame to touch upon the tender string that drove her poor brain from its seat."

"You are indeed," replied her follower, by a significant inclination of the head.

"Ha! I perceive you cannot perform miracles," continues this poor maniac, "you cannot make the dumb to speak yet. Ha, ha, ha! here you come with your sandals, scallop, rosary, and cowl,

and cannot shew me one miracle! where is your fanaticism now? Hush! did not I hear his tread—look behind you—I dare not."

"I see nothing, nor do you need to fear;—sweet one, be patient."

"How! do you come about me with an oily tongue too?—Patient! can I be patient, when I think how *the dogs of war* fawned upon me in their hostile array; the fault was not my own—they dragged me to it—they forced me down the accursed tide of ruin, till I became common in every mouth, till my name was at last the hum, the buz of the whole camp!" This speech was concluded with an hysteric laugh, that eventually overcame her, and she sunk to the ground exhausted.

Our disguised heroine and her follower endeavoured to raise her up, and as they wiped the cold drops from her forehead,

she feebly began again, (as she threw her haggard eye upwards, and shook her head)—"Spare my weakness—but oh, did you but know how unmercifully they tore him I loved, far *far* away from me—that thought is madness! I feel the burning worm anew, 'tis crawling through my brain!" After a desperate struggle she regained her feet, and breaking from them, "They were not satisfied to gallop helter-skelter on to death themselves, but they must halt in all their fury, to pollute a harmless maid, embitter all my future days, and drive me forth into this desolate wilderness of plagues, never to see him more!"

"Now," observes Adeliza, "we find the spring of all her sorrows is *love*—her hopes were sown on an unfruitful soil, and the produce of them disappointment—I pity, I feel for her!"

"Why do you weep? no more of

that," she requests, "come sit you down —you may perhaps feel the cold breeze though I do not—I'll kindle you a fire." So saying, she gathered some sticks, fern and rubbish, struck a light with the implements she had by her side, and immediately produced a flame. "Come, sit you down, 'from first to last' I'll tell you my sad story."

They were both astonished to find her, all at once, collected, and seated themselves, in earnest expectation, by the fire she had so quickly made.

"You may smile," she proceeds, "at the splendor of my dress; but though I am a descendant from Vortigern himself, depend on it they wore no such clothes as mine at that time; but enough.——— There was a man, among those who go forth into battle, I once loved—I reverenced, I adored him! What did I say, a man? he was a hero; let me call him

a god; he was one, and well the gods too knew it; too well for his safety, too fatal for my peace!! One day"—at that moment she broke off, and (like one of some desperate band, whilst regaling themselves, and suddenly surprised) she started up, snatched forth a firebrand, and ejaculated, "He comes! the fury comes, to see if I have passed the *fiery ordeal!* seven hundred and seventy-seven burning impediments have I escaped, and fear not the remainder! Look, look, look, an army of blue locusts with red flaming tails, he brings with him! I fear them not; this is my weapon, come on then!—hold; let me count the number as I escape; one—two—three—four"—thus she continued numbering and dancing across the heath, flourishing the blazing brand over her head, and sometimes singing,

"Dance over the fire, and dance under the fire,
"I would be warm once and I have my desire."

Till she was quite lost to their view; they then departed, not a little astonished at her eccentricity, and pursued their course.

## CHAP. III.

"Sooth, I am weary now—yet I could on—
"And yet I could not——."

COLMAN.

"O blessed, blessed night. I am afraid
"Being but night all this is but a dream,
"Too flattering sweet, to be substantial."

SHAKSPEARE.

"Ha! what new alarm?"

LEWIS.

THEY were yet some distance from Wolfred's castle, and having been thus delayed, the approach of night began to overtake them before they sought a shelter. Patelina was almost fainting

with fatigue, and Adeliza, notwithstanding she had love to inspire her on her journey, began to feel weary too.

"At all events, if you will not let me rest, dear Lady," begins Patelina, "I hope you will let me talk; you was pleased to make me dumb just now, so I ought to have a double privilege of tongue here."

"Well, my girl, and what have you to say?" enquires her mistress.

"Why, in the first place, what do you think of the poor miserable creature that lately left us? that she has been far gone in love requires not a question—but what do you think of her altogether?"

"Why, I know not what to think, more than we have seen; in truth, the less the remembrance of her dwells with us I believe the better, for I have heard it said, 'nourishing the recollection of such

sights will sometimes contribute to bring the disorder on ourselves.'"

"Oh, then, dear Lady, for the Virgin's sake let us forget her; for, my own part I am mad enough already in conscience, and you, Lady, begging your pardon, I think are a little touched!"

"Touched, Patelina! What do you mean?"

"I mean touched here (pointing to her heart) and one thing you know, my Lady, leads on to another (alluding to her head), you understand me; but if you please, we will drop the subject."

"In truth," remarks Adeliza, "I begin to be fatigued as well as you, my wenth; but still I would go on."

"That is love—yes love, my Lady, what I alluded to."

"And I thought you said you would drop the subject."

"Did I? well, as I know of no one very much in love with me, but Father Ambrose, I think we may as well do you know, Lady, I am afraid that is a very deceitful old fellow, for he told me, all the forms and ceremonies he prescribed to the family, were to keep them in the dark, and that they were only the inventions of wise men to take advantage of ignorance. But it is growing late, Lady, and I fear *darkness* will overtake *us*, before we have found another home, bad as the one we have left."

At that instant a person, enveloped in a cowl, descended from a thicket into the road; but seeing our disguised travellers approaching, he rushed up the bank on the other side, and disappeared.

They both followed, calling loudly, and soliciting his return. Having complied with their request, they discover-

ed him to be a hermit, who was passing homeward to his cell and bed of leaves.

Adeliza solicited he would grant them accommodation for the night, in a feigned voice, having her cowl close drawn over her face, as was Patelina's too.

He complied. On entering his habitation of penitence, they perceived he was in years: he had a flowing white beard descending to his breast, and his voice was very feeble.

Our heroine, on the contrary, though in a feigned voice, appeared a very young pilgrim, and Patelina strove to say as little as she could, though it was a very painful task to hold her tongue.

After they had taken refreshment, and returned thanks to the Almighty giver of all blessings, Patelina, in spite of her endeavours, exposed their harmless duplicity by the simple, though fatal mistake

of exchanging the single pronoun of *him* to *her*. This demanded an explanation on both sides, which (strange to relate) discovered in this venerable matron our hero—Florimund himself!

This was indeed a happy meeting. Patelina declared that could she but lay just claim to the holy order she displayed, she would marry them that very night, without further ceremony!

Florimund having learnt the death of Gunilda, and what had passed at the castle, was again reminded of the two figures he had observed under the outer walls at night, and his suspicion of the minstrels increased at Athelina's story—still albeit as perplexity!

He now began to relate his own adventures, and how he had escaped the malice of Wulfredi.

Agreeable to the theme of Berbald's letter, he stay that midstream thrust

into a dark and solitary dungeon, with only some straw—the feeble glimmer of a small lamp, and a little bread and water. Whilst Barbold remained at Shilbourn, he had no chance of an escape, as he was continually visiting him in his wretched confinement, for the satisfaction of displaying his brutal authority, till sent for by Wolfred, to aid him in his attempt on the life of the Earl.

In one of this wretch's visits, Florimund recollected his mentioning, that "he had him over the ditch, and should he die, he would be handy to his burial place;" this led him to suppose by removing some part of the stone floor, he might be able to drop through into the ditch, should there be sufficient depth of water, and thus escape by swimming. This he fortunately effected, after being three days without food, had he not done so, he must inevitably have perished, as no

Barbold's departure, no one had access to him, or even a knowledge he was there.

He immediately made to the first wood he came to, for shelter, having in some measure satisfied his hunger with fruit and berries, wherever he could find them. In the morning as he was making his way out of the thicket, he perceived a cave in the hollow of a rock, where, on entering, he found a very venerable hermit, in the agonies of death, who, after a fervent prayer for Florimund's welfare, and his blessing, for the assistance he had afforded him in his expiring moments, dropped lifeless in his arms.

Florimund could not withhold the tear of compassion, for the lone though tranquil departure of this holy recluse! After committing his remains to the earth, with a suitable prayer for the peace of his

departed soul (not doubting but it had winged its flight to eternal happiness), he adopted the hermit's appearance, having likewise taken off his beard for the completion of his purpose.

In this way he had sometimes taken up his abode in one nook, sometimes in another, and every day strove to gain intelligence that might be conducive to his safety, when all was quiet at Ravenswold.

They now began to consider what steps were most prudent to be taken for the present, and in a short time determined to wander together, disguised as they were, till they could devise the means of exculpating Florimund from all the vengeance that threatened him, and so become honourably united.

Nothing particular transpired to them for several days, till one evening having taken shelter beneath a hovel, to avoid a

heavy shower of rain, a person passed hastily by the spot without availing himself of the like accommodation. He was soon, however, compelled to return, in consequence of the mount in torrents obstructing him on his way.

As he addressed these united wanderers, to question them respecting the course of the country, he appeared confused and agitated; and, on taking off his cap to shake off the water that had lodged on it, who should it prove to be —but the miscreant Barbold!

He left them in a manner that seemed to indicate he had more on his heart than he could easily shake off at his heels; fortunately, the embarrassment he was under prevented him from discovering either Florimund or Adeliza beneath the disguise in which they had taken refuge.

It was now dusk, and the rain still

continued. Presently they heard the galloping of horse at some distance, and as they listened attentively, the sound appeared to advance. It was not long before two persons at full speed passed them, making the very way from which Barbold had been forced to return.

They were in conversation, and the wind blowing very hard on the level, it conveyed the sound more readily to our travellers' ears. Adeliza, as well as Florimund, were both convinced one of the voices was that of Wolfred, and the following words they plainly distinguished, as the animals galloped by—"Nor may wonder at my speed, but as I went not to serve you, you cannot scruple to make me a return of your company—Barbold, no doubt, is secured, from what we witnessed just now. When you arrive at

the end of our journey I will explain all!"

"When," said Florimund, "will there be an end of these mysteries? but let me not disconcert you my love (to Adelina.) The rain has ceased, it is growing late; let us go in search of a more becoming shelter for the night."

They had not gone far before they encountered in their way the carcase of a horse, that had lately fallen dead, apparently beneath a merciless rider.

Affixed, to what had served the purpose of a saddle, they found a small parcel wrapped in a piece of goat-skin; this they took possession of, and it was not long before they arrived at the habitation of an old man of the name of Harbold, who viewing them as pilgrims, and having no great taste for the innovations of religion, refused to receive them as his guests.

It was by this time very dark, and they were induced to confess themselves, in some respects, on which the old man readily consented to their stay till morning, and they entered without further ceremony.

Within sat a sturdy young fellow, the son of Harbold, his name was Gilbert; on their entry he appeared confused, but soon recovered himself; and hearing two of the guests were women disguised in man's apparel, his eyes seemed to sparkle with a peculiar satisfaction.

Neither the host or his son could boast of a very favourable appearance; the old man had a deep scar over his left temple, and the swarthy visage of both exhibited a degree of moroseness by no means pleasing to their guests.

For a little time they sat silent, when all at once the owner of the place (forcing a sort of smile, or what might rather

be termed an insidious grin), observed—"he perceived they were quite *knocked up*. I am not surprised at the female side of the question, but for you, as a man, I am. What do you think of my boy?" he asks, as he lifted the light full on his dark and bushy countenance, then turning it on that of Florimund, he continues, "I should have taken you for a woman *too*, now I look at you again, if you had not told me to the contrary! but come, *cheer up*, and make yourselves at home—we have no women *here* to keep you company."

"What is the use of your asking them to *cheer up*," interrupts Gilbert, "when you do nothing to revive them: let us go out and get in some more sticks, kindle a good *blazing fire*, and leave our visitors in conversation together till we come back."

"With *all my heart*, my lad," re-

plies Harbold, "and on our return we shall be able to find them some refreshment."

With a significant glance at each other, they left Florimund, Adeliza, and their follower, not so composed in their situation as they could have wished; however the former was not willing to judge unfavourably of his fellows, without a more potent cause than that of the external. He endeavoured to comfort Adeliza, and with the aid of the lamp on the rude table before them, proceeded to open the packet they had found on the animal, left dead on the road.

The contents, as it were, petrified them—part of which evinced the horse had fallen under the merciless weight of Barbold, and their sight was finally astonished at the exhibition of several bloody cloths, and a dagger besmeared

with gore; on the handle of which, in glaring letters, stood the name of Wolfred!

Florimund hastened forth in order to conceal them somewhere without till the morning, fearing circumstances might transpire to affix a suspicion of guilt on them, for whatever bloody deed the instrument had been employed on.

Adeliza and her follower nearly fainted at the sight, but the recollection of what might follow from the return of Harbold and his son counteracted their feelings, and sensibility seemed checked by confusion.

In a few minutes Florimund rushed in to them again, and throwing himself on a chair, the victim of new alarm, he utters—" Good God! what have I heard! for your lives watch my every motion, for this diabolical

old fellow and his son are coming to——."

At that moment *they* both entered, and proceeded to kindle a fire, spreading refreshments—their guests were lost in terror and astonishment.

## CHAP. IV.

"Far less abhorr'd than *these*
Vex'd Scylla, bathing in the sea that parts
Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore,
Nor uglier follow the night hag, when called
In secret, riding through the air she comes
Lur'd with the smell of infant blood, to dance
With Lapland witches, while the lab'ring moon
Eclipses at their charms."

MILTON.

FLORIMUND, though the old man had thought fit to apply to his appearance the epithet of woman, was by no means destitute of courage; still, as he had two

(and those of a most desperate as well as despicable sort) now to encounter, for the preservation of Adeliza and her follower (omitting his own personal safety), he was driven to watch their proceedings with caution.

They were ignorant of his having quitted the place when absent, as they were that he had overheard their conversation; a fire was kindled, and their coarse fare spread on the table.

Florimund suffered a thousand apprehensions, least what they were offering so liberally might, from the mixture of some poisonous ingredients, lead to their overthrow, and so closely was he kept in conversation by Gilbert, it was with difficulty he could administer a single sign to his beloved Adeliza or her maid.

The old man, however, and his son beginning to eat very heartily, they fol-

lowed their example on the same food with safety, and were equally cautious as to the beverage they took.

These did not appear to be the means they intended should be fatal, as such Florimund was the more alarmed and puzzled. The fair one complained of fatigue, and eat and drank most sparingly, as did Patelina also.

"And pray, my worthy host," inquires Florimund, "if it is not an impertinent question, do we behold your whole family beneath this roof?"

"Marry, that you do, my young adventurer; and let me tell you, though you do monopolize these fair creatures, you see a very fine fellow in my boy there: he is a chip from this old stem, who, in its day, give me leave to tell you, has not been deficient.

"You seem to carry your years, I think,

with a good flow of spirits still, nor do you appear to want strength to uphold them," returns Florimund.

"You will know more of that by-and-by," mutters the son to himself aside.

Adeliza and her companion sat trembling in silence.

"Spirits!" cries Harbold, "strength! why, zounds! when Gilbert puts on one of his sullen downcast looks, I often laugh, and tell him I shall outlive him still."

"Your son, no doubt, from *the mildness of his features*, (here Gilbert turned aside to conceal a face more like that of a fiend than any thing human)—from the mildness of his features, I repeat, proves, no doubt, a great consolation to you?"

"Yes; and so I will to you presently,"

adds Gilbert to himself, "if I do not to *those you have with you.*"

"A consolation, indeed!" replies the father. "But, come, you do not make yourselves welcome; drink! you perceive how I enjoy myself that way. —Drink, I say; and after that my boy, *my jolly boy*, shall give you a song."

Florimund thanked him for his kindness, but refrained from drinking much, though he *appeared* to partake copiously, and assumed great gaiety: turning round to accost the hopeful offspring of this old villain (whose motive, as well as the son's, was to gratify their carnal desires), he surprised Gilbert raising his arms behind him with something of a small cord; the villain hastily concealed it, and bowed attention.

The old man perceiving his son's con-

fusion, relieved him by requesting he would give them one of his favourite ballads directly.

Florimund was all attention, not without agitation, though he did not appear to notice what had just transpired.

The courage of the two females began to fail them.

Gilbert having recovered his wonted confidence, exchanged a few trifling observations with Florimund, and then began to sing. The drift of the composition, compared the advantages those not overburthened with conscience, had aside of such as felt that inward monitor; in respect to worldly enjoyment, extending even to fraud, rapine, and murder! and, in short, of too profane a nature to find place within the compass of this our recital.

Adeliza's fear increased, as did that of her follower. Florimund's agitation was of a different kind, the temerity of the villain caused his blood to boil; still policy compelled him to wait a fitter opportunity of avenging it.

As they now *assumed* a greater degree of merriment, they began likewise to remove the mask of their treachery, by commencing unwarrantable expressions; and as the old fellow attempted to salute Patelina, his son arose, waving (Florimund's consent,) and was about to take the same liberty with Adeliza; this our hero prevented.

"I beg pardon," says Gilbert, as he endeavoured to conceal the impassioned emotion he felt; "no doubt you are weary, Sir, and our sport becomes troublesome; whenever you please I will attend you to your chamber; we have but

two rooms and two hammocks, you are welcome to them; my father and myself do not mind sitting up all night, taking *our nap* by the fire-side; any thing so as we can but *take care of the passing traveller*."

"What my boy says," adds Harbold, "I second; though I have to beg your pardon for not being first hand with him; but I see how it is, the dog will be before me."

Florimund thanked them, but declined adjourning to rest.

"Well, well," continues Harbold, "if you will not go, I am sure these smooth-chinned pilgrims are weary enough, and I'll shew them the way. I do not know one of their sort in the world I would not give part of a bed to at any time, with the greatest pleasure."

Adeliza having watched the eye of

Florimund during the last speech, politely refused to accompany him.

"As the gentleman, father, does not like to go without them, or they without *him*, perhaps the reason is they are in the habit of dividing differently.

Fired at this observation, the protector of our fair one did not fail to resent it, as far as his present situation became him.

This only roused the indignation of the other, who immediately replied, he supposed Florimund fancied himself a *Nero* in their company, as he would neither *go to bed and be sad, or sit up and be merry*.

"You are right, my boy," adds the father; "and I see no reason, because he objects to being happy with the little rogues, who have thrown away their petticoats, we should do the same; its

two to one against him, and so here goes."

"*What my father says,*" replies Gilbert, imitating Harbold's speech just before, "*I second, though I have to beg pardon for not being beforehand with him; but I see how it is to be, and must follow the example.*"

With these words he arose from his seat, Florimund also started up (fearing an attack) to be on the defensive; but the other stamping with his foot, a trap in the floor gave way, and the lover was precipitated into a dark hole beneath, with orders to prepare immediately for death, as that hour would inevitably be his last.

The women were now solicited to retire, and acquiesce to proposals the most diabolical to their feelings, with threats of instant annihilation should they dare longer to hesitate.

"Wretches!" exclaimed the agonized Adeliza, almost frantic for the fate of Florimund and the cowardly advantage that had been taken of him. "Hell-hounds! give me back all that is dear to me, or take my life. Think ye my honour you can ever touch whilst I wear this poniard for its preservation? think you, to destroy him I have set my affection on is the way to gain the love that's lost forlorn? Why do I even condescend to name a passion your physiognomy proclaims you strangers to. The first that dares approach me meets his fate, and be assured virtue will so nerve my arm my dagger will strike home! Ye fiends in human appearance! though scarcely that can you boast, your accursed wishes heaven will never suffer to be gratified! Yes, I read an evil purpose in your looks; they stamp you both the fatal instruments of lust and murder!"

"*Murder indeed!*" was repeated by a hollow voice that startled them all at first; but Gilbert soon recovered, recollecting it might proceed from him he had just made a prisoner of, and rushing on Adeliza before she could raise her weapon, disarmed her in an instant.

Patelina was immediately secured by the father, and they were now both left to the mercy of what are worse than savages, brutes in a civilized land!

Gilbert dragged Adeliza, who attempted resistance, by the hair of her head to the ladder that led to a loft above; this she seized fast hold of, and all the threats he could employ to make her quit it were useless: but mischief ever

"Swift

To enter into the thoughts of desperate men,"

reminded him of the cord he had in his pocket, and with that he immediately proceeded to bind our heroine hand and foot.

The old man found more to struggle with in Patelina than he had anticipated; two or three times she nearly overcame him!

At the moment all was confusion, the maid encountering the old man, Adeliza screaming and imploring for protection, the son endeavouring to silence her by the most desperate means, and Florimund calling from beneath on heaven for vengeance on their heads; the gleam of torches broke through the apertures of the old boarded window place, and a loud knocking, accompanied by voices demanding admittance, was heard at the door.

"Hell and confusion!" exclaims the

ruffian son of Harbold. "What is to be done? Who would have thought of more travellers at this late hour of the night."

"Open! open!" was again repeated from without.

"Not to night, if we know it," replies the old man; "so move on as soon as you please."

Adeliza and Patelina had hitherto remained silent, on threats of instant death from Gilbert, should they utter a syllable.

"Nay, then," continued the voices, "know we come with a warrant of authority from the king, and can enforce admission any where in quest of those we seek."

"Whom do you seek?" inquires Harbold eagerly.

No matter was the reply; the door di-

rectly flew open, and several officers, soldiers, and pursuers entered.

"What do we behold?" asked some of them.

The wretched owner of the place, and his diabolical offspring, were too much confounded to utter a word in vindication.

Adeliza was about to speak, as Florimund called on her name from the confinement into which he had been precipitated; and whilst some descended to bring our hero forward, others bearing torches entered from without with the packet, bloody poniard, and so forth, that Florimund, in his haste (after overhearing the wretches agree to dispatch him) had failed to conceal effectually.

All parties were immediately secured as prisoners. For the present we leave them, and beg permission to lead the

attention of our readers to the other prominent features of our tale, who by this time had greatly added to the extraordinary circumstances that compose it.

## CHAP. V.

"One wo doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow."

SHAKSPEARE.

"Seal up the mouth of outrage for awhile,
Till we can clear these ambiguities
And know their spring and head—meantime forbear
And let mischance be slave to patience."

IBID.

On Wolfred's arrival at the cavern of Mon Mask and his associates, the latter soon discovered he had no occasion to fear an enemy in his prisoner, but rather view him as one whose liberty would aid

him to obtain the revenge he sought; in short, that on a good understanding, they might prove of essential service to each other in their nefarious pursuits.

Wolfred sought by obtaining Ethelbald's wealth and possessions, to gratify the end of his ambition; and the other, by laying hold of his person, to unmask himself, proclaim his wrongs, and satisfy the anger of his heart; it was not long before they entered into a most solemn compact to execute the end of their designs.

With that view, on hearing of Ethelbald's departure, they set out likewise for the metropolis, in the first place intending to thwart the purpose of his journey, and in the next to bring him back the victim of the robber's revenge.

All appeared quiet at the castle, save a general fear that prevailed of its being visited by supernatural spirits since the

death of Gunilda, and lights were frequently seen about the north tower, though that part of the castle was shut up and abandoned.

One thing appeared somewhat singular, Harold never seemed to suffer under the disagreeable alarm common to the rest of the domestics; Gerald had indeed little fear of being interrupted by spirits, except they were those of this world; but father Ambrose (though he continually spoke of "laying the ghost in the Red Sea,") would not have ventured to that part of the castle, to save the fall of St. Peter's.

"What are you all alarmed about?" he would cry, "fearful of ghosts indeed! —why do you not mend your ungodly lives then—you shall see in me what a shield of security is our holy religion—I'll lay the ghost—I'll *bury* him in the Red Sea—I say *him*, though indeed you

have not told me yet whether the spirit be male or female?"

"Ha, ha, ha, male or female!" says Gerald. "Come, that's very well: and pray, father Ambrose, what difference may there be in laying the one and the other?"

"Holy St. Anthony! and is it possible you have borne that head of your's about till it is nearly falling from the pivot, and do not know that it is more difficult to lay the spirit of a woman than it is that of a man? Why, the spirit of a woman is a compound of all that is heterogeneous, her brain a mixture of every description of opposites, and her nature in every respect a jumble of extremes; her thoughts frivolous and light as feathers, or heavy and drossy as lead; in brief, she's a hodgepodge of all that's parenchymatous, imperspicuous, volatile, hypochondriac, opiparous, hyperbolical, hypocritical and

hypercritical, disingenuous, sophisticated, puritanical, libidinous, crepusculous, emollient, refractory, obstreperous, and sometimes not to be laid by the very d——l himself! St. Augustine forgive me for using the name of that angel of darkness; but I'll lay this spirit—I'll cure you of your fears—I'll do——"

"Yes, but when?" inquires Gerald; which inquiry was immediately followed up by all the rest of the household.

"When? when? why you open your mouths like a parcel of callow rooks that want feeding! when, say you? why to-morrow night."

"Ha, ha, ha! you have promised us so half a dozen times; but we know the old saying, 'to-morrow never comes.' By our lady, I think you are as much afraid of ghosts as any one of us, and if I was a woman for your sake—ha, ha,

ha!—I think I should ruffle your cowl a little?"

"Charity covers a multitude of sins, as such I pardon you; and may heaven help your poor silly head."

"Ha, ha, ha, my poor silly head!—Ha, ha, ha. Come, suppose we lay the ghost directly, I will go and help you—*my poor silly head!* ha, ha, ha! you are afraid: it was well Patelina did not hear you running down the women, *my silly head!* she would have pulled your ears for you, *my poor silly head!* ha, ha, ha.—Let's bury the apparition; there is nothing like the time present, as we do not know what mischief it may do. You are afraid, I see; you are afraid—ha, ha, *my silly head!*" thus muttering to himself, he hobbled out of the hall.

"Afraid! mark that ye chosen number of my flock, he talks of my fear of the

evil spirit; his nature grows rebellious, and *by bell, book, and candle*, if he had not one foot in the grave I would *excommunicate* him! Do you not think, my children, I am too well armed in goodness to stand in fear of evil—remember how the devils worried St. Anthony, but all in vain, and so would it be should any evil spirit attack me—St. Anthony's fire! but I am all in *a heat;*—I fear not evil spirits, and such they must be that ever return to earth, for many *learned reasons*."

Harold, who had whispered his old fellow domestic as he retired, now took on himself to keep the friar in harangue, by requesting to be indulged with a few of those reasons he alluded to.

"You shall know them, my children; you shall be made wise through me; you shall find that I am a rock not to be

moved by idle fears, but *a rock of faith* founded on *the rock of ages*, that nothing can frighten, nothing can shake. But to the point—a spirit, my children, you must know is—is—is a—spirit."

"So I supposed," coolly replies Harold.

"Yes, that is to say, a spirit is an essence of that essence, which joined to a substance is the essence of all substance, and the substance of all essence; and as long as that spirit cleaves to the spirit, that is, the spirit of all spirits, consequently it is a good spirit; but when it revolts and returns of its own accord back to the things of this world (and whereas this world is a world betwixt the world of evil and the world of good), returning back renders the spirit no longer a good spirit, but one hunting after evil, therefore an evil spirit."

"Very ably defined, indeed!" observes Harold.

"What a thing spiritual learning is," adds some of the other domestics.

"And moreover, it fortifies you," continues Ambrose, as I said before, "against all fear of the things of this world, and the spirit of evil. Then again a spirit that revolts from the spirit operates against itself in another respect, and thereby becomes a spirit of evil. Whereas some are employed as guardian spirits, and those never visit us except it be invisibly; the spirit that renders itself visible acts in opposition to the invisible guardian spirits, and therefore should not be received as a guardian spirit; and as no spirits are permitted to wander neutral, that which leans to evil cannot be good, consequently again, must be an evil spirit."

"Very well argued again," was the reply from all.

"But, pray," inquires Harold, "if a spirit has endured injuries from other spirits, may it not return to seek retribution?"

"That," replies *the great pillar of the faith*, "was the belief of the world up to the time *the walls of Jericho fell down*; when it was found that the spirit wandering from home after death, to seek redress for wrongs imposed whilst living, was, as it were 'taking the law into its own hands,' it being proved that judgment might fall in substance on the substance of evil essence, not by the power of substance effecting it or the power of returning essence, but the simple *sound of a ram's horn*."

"Can it be possible!" returns Harold; "why knowledge like this was surely never acquired by study?"

"Steady! *Inspiration*, inspiration my children."

"But pray," they inquired, "as we are taught to believe that all *below* is darkness, and the spirit that has been seen here by some is said to be white as snow; how do you still maintain it to be an evil spirit, especially as every sound that has been heard to fall from it resembles the notes of a celestial?"

"Because it is an evil spirit in disguise! a strumpet dressed in white, a painted sepulchre, a snake in the grass; and all the music that flows from its lips is wrought by the power of magic, the breeze of pestilence, and as full of seduction as the voice of a syren!"

"O, the spirit of wisdom! and pray what is your fancy for laying them in the Red Sea in particular?"

"Because *Pharaoh* and all his followers were laid there; as they have

never returned again, it is deemed the safest place; every body knows they were an *host* of evil spirits. Another reason is, in some part of that famous sea there is supposed to be no bottom; so the Lord knows where they sink to, and nothing is to be wondered at, their never coming back again. Some say it is a roundabout way to the burning mountains in Sicily, and you have all heard where that road leads to. No matter; be you all ruled by my admonitions, and you have nothing to fear; you will find I am undaunted—sheltered from all alarm, and fixed as a rock."

Just as he uttered these words, Gerald, who had been in the wardrobe, and dressed up his meagre figure in one of the finest robes of muslin he could get, stalked solemnly into the hall, and the friar catching sight of him, exclaimed—"O L——d! here is a ghost, indeed! a

ghost! a ghost!! a ghost!!!" and covering his face with his cowl ran out of the place."

"Ha, ha, ha! *my poor silly head!*" cries Gerald, as all the rest of the attendants joined him in a laugh; "there goes *the pillar of our faith,* there goes the *abuser of women,* there goes the *layer of spirits*—oh, my *poor silly head!*"

"Yes," continues Harold, "there goes *the rock not to be shaken by idle fears, the rock of faith founded on the rock of ages that nothing can alarm,* the man fortified against *all fear of the things of this world and the spirit of evil,* there goes the *child of inspiration,* the *shepherd of the flock!*"

"Ha, ha, ha! but the wolf no sooner descended than the shepherd ran away—ha, ha, ha—oh, my *poor silly head!* He had not the courage to stay and *lay me*—ha, ha. I'm very lean, its true, be-

cause I have had my day; but I never was taken for *a shadow* before—ha, ha, ha. Come along *to vespers!* oh, my *poor silly head!*"

## CHAP. VI.

——————————" Safety dwells
Remote from multitude; the world's a school
Of wrong, and what proficients swarm around
We must, or imitate, or disapprove;
Most list as their accomplices, or foes;
That stains our innocence; this wounds our peace."

YOUNG.

WOLFRED and Furbrand, with part of the band, arrived in London soon after Ethelbald and his attendants. Having taken up their abode in as private a manner as suited their purpose, they began to consider what steps would be most prudent for them to take.

Just at that time there reigned much discontent respecting the division of the the kingdom between Edmund and Canute; and the lower order of the Danish party, fired by a few hot-brained superiors, were very inveterate.

Wolfred, (as is generally the case with men of his restless disposition), sided with the adverse party to his own blood, and was an advocate for the heads of the Danish faction.

Where nature inclines to be vicious, the dissipation of cities seldom fails to furnish that food which, in the end, consumes the very being that devours it. Wolfred had not been long in the metropolis before he was again invited to the association of those, who, thinking they should put an end to national dispute, and thereby gratify the ambition of Canute, by allowing the Danes alone to govern, sought to throw off allegiance to the Saxon

power by the destruction of the noble Ironside.

These visits he conducted unknown to his companion Furbrand, who still preserved his mask for the present, and assumed a suitable disguise for the time they remained in the metropolis. Wolfred obtained information that Ethelbald had presented his petition to Edmund, and was to be admitted to an audience of the two kings in the course of a few days.

This they sought to prevent. Furbrand feared, after all he had suffered, and the opportunities lost, of revenging the wrongs that had been put upon him, the object of his hatred might yet escape, unless he could again make him his prisoner. This Wolfred promised he should be able to effect, as well as secure the future satisfaction and comfort of them both; but must observe silence for the present, in honour to the party through whose means

he should be able to put his designs in execution.

The being of the sable mask had by this time too much confidence in him to doubt a syllable of any thing he uttered, for though Wolfred had no knowledge of him, even when unmasked, be it known to the reader, Furbrand knew Wolfred from the beginning; he was convinced his intentions were real, and that the interest of one was the interest of both.

Furbrand, as he was one morning sitting with Wolfred, after they had made what other arrangements were necessary, agreeable to promise, began to relate his adventures; the maxims of which are not to be received as proper ones, but those of a desperate man.

"As we are now alone," he begins, "I will open to you a history, I think, will not only draw forth your pity, and make you wonder at the mysterious ways

of a supreme Power, if such a power there be, but, likewise, almost justify whatever have been my actions, since I became an outlaw, and moreover, palliate the worst I can be guilty of, even unto death."

"I am descended of Danish parents, who, having espoused the Christian faith, and settled in England, during the reign of Edgar, I was received as an acknowledged English subject, and early in life admitted (at my own request) into the gallant profession of arms."

"I fought the battles of my country nobly, for fame was my idol: I exulted in the dangers I encountered, for love was my reward. My father was now no more, and where the heart warms with affection towards its fellow creatures as it loses one object in death, it still seeks to dwell upon another.

"Love next succeeded. It was not the love of common men, it was sacred pas-

sion, it was extacy. The adorable being of my heart was not one whose bodily, or mental charms were struck in the common mould—she was the soul's perfection in one piece.

"Oh! how I loved her! At that time my own heart was pure, was good, was grateful: how then had I incensed heaven, having never offended man, that such unheard of misery should fall upon me? Heaven surely cannot punish without offence? Yet, so it was; I was overthrown, and can you wonder at rebellion being the sequel of my actions.

"The father of her I loved, together with what afterwards became the object of my adoration, I rescued from men of the same determined quality I am now professing myself; and, that at a moment when death would inevitably have been his portion, and dishonour the fate of his child.

"He thanked me—he more than thanked me—he let fall the venerable tear of a brave and honourable man upon my breast, and that I received as a blessing. He was high in rank, as an officer under the king for whom I fought; he procured me advancement, nay, more, he promised me the amiable prize I had rescued as the final reward of my courage.

"Judge of my feelings then, my noble friend, my expectations, my inward, my transported satisfaction: I fancied I was soaring, as does the towering eagle against the sun, and that all other flights were weak compared to mine. I had honour which I dwelt on as the preservation of my fame. I was beloved, that I thought would secure me happiness, and I possessed courage for the protection of my person and honour.

"Who could have supposed, surrounded as I was by blessings, (given, as I un-

derstood, to be the fruit of my deserts,) I could, without just cause, be suddenly deprived of them, and almost of my life?"

Wolfred here expressed his surprise; but perceiving the earnest energy of the robber to pursue his narration, remained silent.

He continued: "Her father died.—As I bore no enmity against my fellow man, so, without offence, I did not expect it from any one. Alas! how was I deceived! There were men jealous of my prospects of happiness; wretches envious of my growing honours; and miscreants who plotted my ruin.

"We had been some time encamped for the preservation of the laws and liberties for which we have in a great measure to thank the noble Alfred, when a rival in my affections forced me into a combat: I subdued him, but raised up others of a more artful kind, who sought to ensnare

the celestial object of my admiration; their efforts failed, but in rewarding some of them as they deserved, it only increased the hatred of the rest. To satisfy my troubled mind the morning was fixed that we should be united in the bonds of sacred happiness, when, oh! hell and tortures! I can never think of the fatal period but my swollen brain seems scorching in the socket—they belied me; dragged me to public trial; robbed me of love, of honor; loaded me with disgrace and infamy; and sent me forth an outcast to wander in concealment, the terror of every one that came in my way."

Wolfred perceiving the extreme agitation that gave utterance to the last part of Furbrand's story, and deeming the circumstances of a similar nature to others he had some remembrance of, solicited he would be more explicit, and indulge him with further particulars,

Furbrand bowed compliance, and was about again to proceed as Barbold solicited, in hasty terms, admission upon life and death.

On his entrance he exclaimed, "The deed is perpetrated, my Lord, but we must fly."

"What deed?" inquires Furbrand hastily.

"No matter," replies Wolfred; all is for the best."

"Ha!" cries the robber, "am I then ensnared?"

"Nay, fear not that," returns the other, "let me inquire further."

"Pardon me, my Lord," says Barbold, hastily, "there is no time to lose."

"But tell me," continues Wolfred, "after your purpose was executed, what occurred to enforce this sudden alarm?"

"My Lord, I have not time to tell."

"What is the purpose you speak of?"

demands Furbrand, perplexed at this interruption. "Have you then dared to deceive me?"

"Fear not, my friend," replies Wolfred, "rather would I perish."

"If you choose to stay and perish, my Lord," observes Barbold, "it is no reason I should be fool enough to do the same. I have alarmed the Captain's followers; they wait his command, and are no doubt impatient to depart, though they know not the immediate cause that should urge them so to do."

"If you have time thus much to explain, you have doubtless opportunity to let me know the business you have been transacting, and the danger I have to avoid," observes Furbrand.

"I beg both your pardons," he answers, "but self-preservation forbids me to delay any longer."—With that he vanished.

"Ha, is he gone," exclaims Wolfred; "What can this mean?"

Furbrand, (seizing Wolfred,) "That is what I must learn."

"Unhand me, I entreat."

"Then the purpose he has had to execute; tell me that."

"I am your friend; let that suffice."

"Tell me, what has been his errand, as you value my friendship."

"No more inquiries, but let us fly."

"Nay then, as you value life; for I must be satisfied."

"And so you shall; but how? not by detaining me till we are both secured. Be wise:—let us directly fly to your abode—I will tell you every thing as we move onwards."

"Furbrand was with difficulty persuaded to comply: however, they retired in safety from the metropolis, and the next

night arrived at the secret habitation of Sable Mask. On their return they passed the hovel wherein Florimund, Adeliza, and her attendant had taken shelter, (as before mentioned); and safely passed the mountain torrents that were the occasion of Barbold's return; though he was the first to quit the metropolis, of his fate we have hereafter to make further mention."

## CHAP. VII.

"Night is, indeed, the province of his reign."

OVID.

"The sky her only canopy of state."

IBID.

As Barbold was not returned they concluded all was not so well with him as they could wish, and of course trembled for their own safety.

Wolfred solicited the Captain, who had again resumed his iron mask, to finish his history, or rather to be more explicit, in what he had related, of the circumstances

that brought him to the course of life he was then pursuing.

This he declined for the present, with a promise, that as soon as by stratagem Ethelbald again became his prisoner, he would satisfy him fully in every respect, and convince him he was not seeking retribution without having experienced the most poignant injuries.

On Furbrand's requesting to be informed of the motives of their sudden flight from the metropolis, Wolfred begged leave to treasure his secret in return, for a short time. This was agreed to; they, likewise, further consented to lose no time in ensnaring the Earl again, as soon as they could venture forth in safety, that the ambitious aims of the one and the revenge of the other, as well as the curiosity of both, might finally be satisfied.

In the mean time, this band of robbers continued to make reprisals; and one

morning returned with information, that Ethelbald was again bending his course back to Ravenswold.

With a view to prevent this, the man in the iron mask, attended by his followers, and the unnatural brother of the Earl, in disguise, issued forth the very next evening.

As the face of heaven became obscured by the dark curtain of the vaporous clouds, Furbrand possessed a peculiar advantage over the rest of his companions, that of, between the ears of his steed, distinguishing any object at a greater distance. Presently he perceived something approaching, and instantly commanded them all to halt and listen.

Whatever it could be he only distinguished one object: it seemed clad in white, and as it advanced nearer, the others distinguished it likewise: shortly they could

hear a voice which sung in a very plaintive strain, as follows:

The moon is sunk in night,
The stars have drop'd their light;
And poor maids that have lost their wits,
Are now abandoned quite.

As our great poet describes the force of music on "a wild and wanton herd," so were these desperadoes instantaneously charmed by the fascination of the tones proceeding from the figure before them, heightened as they were by the stillness of the night.

The music having ceased, the voice continued in speech as follows:—"Why do I complain of darkness when it shelters me from my tormentor?—All is calm and quiet now; not a breath of wind blows upon poor Winifred; they tell me

I am mad; but I do not believe them;—had it been so I could not have escaped the trials he has put me to so ingeniously.

She was now approaching near them; it was the poor wretch whom Adeliza and her follower had met on the heath. As soon as she perceived the banditti she made a sudden stop and exclaimed,—"What, cannot I escape even behind the curtain? I blew out the lights that no one might see me; but now the evil spirits come again.

One, two, three, four,
All in black; and many more.

"Have pity upon *poor Winifred* that sleeps under the hawthorn, when the wind blows and the snow drives over her head. Stay where you are, and Winifred will sing to you."

Four and twenty bold young men,
Mounted in fine array,
And headed by their Captain brave,
Went forth o' the king's highway.

They robb'd the rich, they fed the poor,
They drank and they carous'd;
Till angry justice found their haunts,
And quickly they were unhous'd.

Now, had these four and twenty men
Been forth to serve their king,
They had not on the gallows tree
Been lastly compelled to swing.

"Ha! what says the maniac? by hell, perhaps, she prophecies! but we will hear her farther," cries the leader of the banditti.

She continues: "There they are still —there they are still.—

One, two, three, four,
Rogues in black, and many more.

"Well, well, darkness covers all—the heart of a friar is hid under his tunic, and many a coward shoots with a long bow—they shot *poor Winifred*, they pierced her to the heart; and now she wanders from warder to warder, but can find no admittance—Large crumbs fall from the rich man's table, but she cannot obtain leave to pick them up!—Fie on their consciences, (if they have any.)—They bask in evil, enjoy the good things of this life, and would rob *poor Winifred* of her share in the next; but hush! no more of that—move on—move on—they do not see me—I shall escape them—thread my needle—thread my needle."

"Hold!" exclaims Furbrand, "she must not pass—there is something extraordinary in her conduct that requires investigation; two of you take charge of her and bear her back to the cavern."

The Captain's orders were put in execution, and the banditti proceeded.

It was not long before they arrived at the heath over which Ethelbald and his attendants were expected to pass; confident of security with the guard he had around him, he did not scruple again to travel by night; having likewise received a promise his complaints should be redressed.

The cavalcade soon arrived, and a desperate attack commenced, in which the robbers finally obtained advantage, with only one killed and others wounded; but in the heat of the skirmish the Earl was advised to fly; and under the darkness of the night he contrived the same effectually.

Several of the Earl's attendants were slain, and of those who did not fly there were six, whom Fairbrand and his

party conducted prisoners to their subterranean abode.

Wolfred was once nearly subdued, the consequences of which would have been peculiarly fatal to him; but Furbrand rode up just in time to parry the blow and rescue his partner from jeopardy.

Ethelbald and his straggling followers arrived afterwards, irregularly, at the castle. The Earl was more than ever astonished at the daring attack of Ironmask and his associates.

He gave directions that every secret passage to the castle should be barricaded, and placed a double guard in all the avenues. He next proceeded to make inquiry of what had transpired in his absence, and many circumstances were named, that again harrowed up his soul, respecting the death of Gunil-

da. Having taken every precaution in his power, for his own safety, and the preservation of the castle, he waited the exertion of higher powers to secure and bring his secret enemy to justice.

But great, indeed, was his surprise to find his ward, Adeliza, with her attendant, had fled the castle. He regretted the departure of Florimund; and entertained a thousand surmises what might have been the fate of his brother; indeed, the mysteries of the Towers of Ravenswold, altogether, involved him in a labyrinth of fear and wonder nothing but time could develop.

Notwithstanding the commission he had given Harold to execute, in the north tower, he found remorse was not so easily to be shaken from a murderer's bosom. The recollection of Gunilda

thrilled through his blood—her bleeding form was still before his eyes—and his dreams were pregnant with the most terrifying sights and "horrible imaginings."

Furbrand, and the Earl's brother, at the cave, were still at a loss respecting Barbold. They were puzzled for their own safety, and anxious for another stratagem to obtain the object they had last been in search of; this they resolved should be their first consideration.

The robber knew, if he could but gain an interview with the minstrels, (which he now informed Wolfred were planted in the castle, by his precaution,) he would easily hit on some contrivance with them, that could not fail, in the end, to accomplish their wishes.

Having been told, that the poor maniac, Winifred, was safely secured below,

the Captain refused to delay time with her till he had seen the spies alluded to.

The six prisoners brought home from the skirmish being well secured, Furbrand, alone, in disguise, adventured to the castle, and the next day returned with intelligence that gave rise to another expedition.

## CHAP. VIII.

"A roused vengeance sets them new awork,
And never did the Cyclops hammer fall,
On Mars's armour forged for proof etern
With less remorse."

SHAKSPEARE.

THE lovers, with their attendant also, in disguise, and the two miscreants of the hovel, who were all secured together, underwent an examination, on suspicion of being concerned in a crime that will hereafter come to light, but which for special reasons must be withheld from our readers for the present.

They were committed for further trial and confined to separate cells, so that Florimund and Adeliza had not now an opportunity even of exchanging sighs.

How critical is the evidence of circumstance on the event of murder—the lovers were afflicted and amazed, and shuddered at the event of being linked with the villains above named, as well as what might ensue.

The robbers again set out, headed by their leader, whose advice to Wolfred was, he should not stir from the cavern to share in this attempt, but wait with a few of the band whom he would leave to attend him, till he received intelligence of its issue.

Wolfred consented. Though he was eager to secure Adeliza as his own, in defiance to her father's dying injunctions, still he knew there was danger in his appearing abroad, after what had happened,

to occasion his hasty flight from the metropolis.

The castle of Ravenswold was still a scene of terror, doubt, and confusion.

Father Ambrose busied himself in reprobating what had been the conduct of the domestics during the Earl's absence, and the spirit of his complaint only tended to add to Ethelbald's trouble and agitation.

"I can no longer dwell under a roof," he commences, "where there is nothing but hurly-burly—ghosts—disobedience and animosity! The pope, the holy pope, has no more sway here, than he has in the deserts of Arabia, or among the *illiterate* and *obstinate* Chinese. Instead of their kissing the hem of my garment, in hopes of *absolution*, they only scoff at me as I pass, and so redouble their crimes. But St. Peter be thanked there are *other gates* besides those that gave them ad-

mittance under this hospitable roof, and if they are ever banished *these*, I am afraid they will find some difficulty in gaining access *elsewhere*, though it be only one of remembrance of their abominable treatment to *me*."

"Hold!" cries Ethelbald, "that is profanation—let me punish them *here*."

"Here! no punishment can be adequate to the enormity of their treating me (who am a *consecrated shepherd* over them) with the contempt they do. Harold says but little, he is a hardened sinner, and has had the audacity to talk to me about *superstition*—but that old reprobate Gerald, that death's head dropping into the grave, that picture of old age and imbecility, walking about a *memento mori* to all the rest of the vassals, is not only one who ridicules me, but the power from which I am commissioned."

"And is it possible things have been thus deranged whilst I was away?"

"Indeed it is true. He pretends to scoff at the mysteries of the north tower, and to doubt the appearance of sights supernatural."

"Ha! speak—what of the north tower?"

"Dreadful indeed!—lights are continually seen there—loud knockings and groans are heard, howlings, the rattling of chains, and other noises too terrible to be described."

"And have you witnessed any thing of unusual appearance?"

"I have. It was but the other day I was haranguing the domestics respecting the *composition* and *nature* of a spirit, wherein I attempted to shew that the ghost of a woman is much more difficult to be laid than that of a man; that all

spirits that returned again must be unquiet spirits, consequently evil ones, which I proved on a number of different positions. Having instructed them farther respecting the cause of evil spirits being laid in the Red Sea in particular, I turned myself round, and to my great astonishment what should I behold, but the apparition of your beloved consort, Gunilda!"

"You have amazed me! Gunilda say'st thou—summon all my vassals, and let me have a confirmation of this terrible truth."

"How!—do you dare dispute the *veracity of the church?*"

"I know not what I dare!" replies the agitated Earl, "but call hither my domestics—I command you."

"Do you not know the church has *primitive sway*, and must not be commanded?"

"Call in my vassals!"

"Nay, proud lord, thy spirit becomes

*heretical*, and you must be reported to the pope; should I do so, you will be *excommunicated*."

"Hell and confusion! let my castle be assembled."

The friar putting on a very sanctified look, and turning up his eyes with astonishment at the Earl's last expression and mandate *crossed himself*, quitted the apartment, and on the domestics being summoned, refused to return with them.

Ethelbald having gathered them altogether, began to make inquiries if the castle was secure from secret as well as open attack, to which they answered in the affirmative, when he next proceeded to question them as to what they had seen.

"Allow me, my Lord," says Gerald, being your *senior vassal*, (as these few grey locks may display), to reply to you in behalf of my fellow domestics."

"Do so, and be brief?" answers the impatient Earl.

"My Lord, I am always so—though Father Ambrose is pleased to call mine a poor silly head—I love to be brief, for time is short, and every moment that flies is a moment nearer the grave—therefore we should always endeavour to make the most we can of our time."

"You are now losing it by expatiating on it—tell me what have ye seen?"

"My Lord, I will—but you cannot say I *lose time* by *expatiating on it*; for, in order to find out the real value of time, we ought to dwell with due consideration on what that value is, and though, as I said before, Father Ambrose calls mine *a silly head*, yet——"

"Pshaw! away dotard; Harold, do you inform me?"

"My Lord, I do not well understand," Harold replies.

"Nay? I mean, have you a spirit seen? The friar informs me that in my absence a figure, like the lost Gunilda, passed through the castle."

"Ha, ha, ha! a spirit!" cries Gerald, "Ha, ha, ha! that's very well. Father Ambrose is a very weak man, and did not stay long enough in the hall to see what the spirit was—but I can inform you, my Lord, it was *Me*—yes, me my Lord, dressed up on purpose to frighten him; and I assure you my Lord, we have seen nothing in the castle unlike ourselves since your Lordship's departure."

"Ridiculous! then have there not been noises heard, and lights seen in and about the north tower?"

"My Lord, that we cannot deny."

"It is very strange, and much it troubles me," observes the Earl, as the friar ventured to make his appearance again.

"Well, my Lord," he inquires, "have you not found what I stated to be true?"

"I am perfectly *satisfied*," returns Ethelbald, "I feel much oppressed, where are those minstrels—let me have music to compose my troubled soul."

It was now growing late, the minstrels were not of the number in attendance, and one of the vassals was dispatched in quest of them.

He had not been absent many minutes before he returned in the utmost haste and alarm!

"Your looks are ominous," exclaims the Earl, "what means that linen coloured face you bring me?"

"My Lord," he cries, "my Lord! *the castle is in flames!* it is *blazing in several places*, and the *minstrels are nowhere to be found!!*"

At that moment the figure of a Lady, resembling the martyred Gunilda, glided through the apartment. "Mighty Powers!" the Earl ejaculates. "It is her form; her very features—see where she vanishes!"

The whole castle was struck with amazement.

All endeavours to stop the progress of the flames were found ineffectual, and the Earl was so overcome by the sudden alarm and appearance of the vision of Gunilda, his powers failed him, and he was borne from the flames by Harold and another attendant; the rest of the domestics followed.

They had no sooner crossed the drawbridge, and passed the outer gates amidst the blazing of torches, than they were attacked by three ruffians. Harold and the other attendant driven off, Ethelbald was secured, bound across one of their

horses, and once more conveyed into the inveterate and mysterious presence of the man in the Iron Mask.

On the robber's last stolen visit to the castle, he engaged the minstrels, who had all along been in his employ, to fire the castle at an appointed hour, in several places; and was himself with his associates in readiness to carry off the Earl once more to his terrific habitation.

Thus, in a few hours, notwithstanding all his conscious security, and expectation of farther protection, his vassals were dispersed to wherever they could seek shelter; his castle became a heap of smoaking ruins, and himself again a prisoner in the hands of that man—the one he had most to fear in the world; and all this dreadful calamity from treachery *within doors*: we allude to the two minstrels who were literally two of the banditti that had thus insinuated themselves

into the Earl's employ—it was one of them in conversation with their leader, that Florimund beheld under the castle wall; they were the instruments of Furbrand's access to Ethelbald, and had finally assisted him in the last fatal catastrophe.

He was now thrown into a dungeon to reflect on the various circumstances, good and bad, his past life had witnessed. Half-persuaded Gunilda was innocent—he shuddered at her miserable end, and the remembrance of the vision he had seen of her before he was borne out of the flames; he recollected his harsh treatment of Florimund and the blow he had given him on the bridge; he was perplexed about his brother's fortunes, till given to understand he was a prisoner there with himself; and he often wept for the fate of Adeliza, who was the daughter of one he sincerely respected.

It is evident Ethelbald might have taken greater precautions for his security; nor had he for a time any occasion to return to the castle at all, but his reflections on the death of Gunilda, rendered him unfit for society, and incapable of being always on his guard for the preservation of his own safety at court: indeed, the disturbed state of his faculties caused him to resemble the moth, though he was aware of the danger, it appeared he could not avoid running into the flame.

## CHAP. IX.

"Ask thy own heart,
Did innocence and beauty bend before thee
Hunted and trembling, would'st thou tamely pause,
Scanning pale council from deliberate fear,
And weigh each possibility of danger?
No; the instinctive nobleness of blood
Would start beyond the reach of such cold scruples,
And instant gratify its generous ardour."

JEPHSON.

FLORIMUND had not long been confined to the cell of his prison before he discovered that his adorable Adeliza was secured in the next cell but one to his, and betwixt them both Patelina; the

situations of the other two prisoners he was by no means anxious to learn.

He immediately set about removing a stone in the wall, taking care to conceal his operations whenever the guard opened the ponderous door to administer to him his scanty pittance; it was not many days before he accomplished the task, and was enabled to converse with Patelina, without the fear of being heard from without by those who kept watch through the dreary precincts.

He, in the first place, gave the girl directions, whenever she heard the guard at the door of her cell to give him a signal by three taps on the wall, so that he might at all times avoid opening the aperture to occasion a discovery, or close it to avoid suspicion, though he was pretty well aware of the time their rough keeper took his rounds.

Patelina next, by the instructions of

our hero, began to pierce the wall that separated her from her mistress Adeliza, and in the end effected a communication.

The lovers even then began to feel a degree of happiness before unknown in their dreary abode, as they could now exchange, through the medium of their faithful fellow-sufferer, their observations and their sighs.

Florimund having once before escaped the horrors of a dungeon's gloom was forbidden to despair, and began to consider in what way he had best proceed. He felt convinced they were all liable to suffer from the disguised and peculiar manner in which they were taken with the two wretches, to whom they were strangers.

The hole he had perforated being in a dark corner of the cell, he thought it would be best to enlarge that and the one in Pateline's, which he could now perform in a

single night, having shifted one stone to commence with; but first he had to remove an iron bar of his window, from which he perceived it was about twenty feet to the terrace that surrounded the castle; their descent he thought he could effect, but though there was no wall beyond the one that confined them, there was a centinel continually on duty.

This was a dreadful obstruction to his hopes, however it did not restrain him from perseverance; on inspection, the bar was greatly decayed by rust, and by removing part of the stone connected with it, he finally effected his wishes, but this endeavour was almost as tedious to accomplish as that of the animal in the fable that aided the escape of the lion.

We are taught "man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards," so as we

are all sent to die, we are all in some measure born to experience disappointment; and love without *its* crosses would be what is seldom heard of—but, oh! what an unexpected shock were the lovers now about to receive!

One morning the guard entered Patelina's apartment rather unexpectedly, and the unfortunate girl happening to be asleep could not give the signal; Florimund was just then removing the stone, and the fellow discovered their communication.

This was indeed a terrible blow to their hopes, he quitted the cell, and flew to give information of what he had seen.

Florimund was eager to send a parting word to his fair Adeliza, and she equally impatient to do the same to her beloved Florimund, whilst Patelina ran from one to the other in confusion, scarcely know-

ing what she said or where she really was.

How great was their surprise to find, after a considerable time, the jailor did not return, and that all was silent and undisturbed through the prison as if nothing had happened.

As good often springs out of evil, so do we sometimes find ourselves fortunate at the very moment we seem to fear the hand of oppression is about to annihilate us; and that is a lesson that should guard man ever against self-destruction, as it forbids him to despair.

Whilst Florimund sat musing what could be the meaning of this unexpected lenity, at a time he supposed he should be laid by the heels in double irons, the very man, who had not since returned to Patelina's cell, entered Florimund's, who naturally awaited his sentence.

"You will, no doubt, be surprised," says Bertrand, for that was his name, "at the nature of my errand after what I just now discovered, but you must know, I some days back perceived your two fellow prisoners wore no beards on their chins, and if I am not deceived they will turn out to be women."

"My jailor, I will be candid with you," returns Florimund; "they *are* women."

To this confession he revealed other particulars, and protested his love and innocence.

"Then," observed the other, "as much as you love the lady, just so much do I love the appearance of her attendant, (for the other two prisoners they appear devils incarnate, and confirm the sincerity of what you have told me) I am convinced of your innocence; my love for the girl in the next cell restrained me

from betraying what I witnessed: I can never be happy without her; I will aid your escape, and fly with her to the end of the world."

"My friend," replies Florimund, "I can no farther put confidence in such unexpected professions, than as I witness your indulgence by winking at what you have seen, and an honourable conduct towards the two females in the adjoining cells. But that I was not only sensible of our danger in the company of those with whom we were brought hither, but likewise conscious we are innocent of whatever crime might be alleged against us, I could not for a moment, in justice to my own honour, allow myself to listen to what you propose."

"As my love is desperate, do not attempt to argue against it," he observed.

"Then, if it must be so, indulge me in my own operations, and be not concerned yourself in the matter at all. I may hereafter, if I find you sincere, plan an escape, and provided the girl consents I pledge my honour to acquaint you at a proper time hereafter where you may find us, and possess what you desire."

"Nay, at the hazard of my life," he cries, "I must accompany her."

"Then," replies Florimund, "I decline listening to you, as it will surely prove the occasion of our being retaken; let us close the subject for the present, and you can visit Patelina, and woo her in the mean time."

Bertrand consented, and Florimund expressed his gratitude for the kindness of the favour he had shewn them.

After a day or two had passed over

their heads as pleasantly as their situations would admit, (and our readers may be assured they were all most agreeably surprised, and indeed Patelina was pleased beyond measure at the thoughts of meeting a husband in so extraordinary a manner), Bertrand consented to rely on Florimund's promise, that he would aid him to complete his wishes, and secure him permanent happiness at a future period, when their innocence might be known and every thing wrought more securely.

Bertrand's conduct confirmed his sincerity, and Patelina's heart was all in a blaze. He furnished Florimund with the means of being rid of his irons, and the night was fixed for this desperate undertaking.

Our hero succeeded in once more arriving at the superlative transport of a chaste embrace from his ever-to-be-beloved Adeliza. He conducted her to his

cell, removed the bar of his window, and having affixed a cord by which they were to descend, and with which the enamoured Bertrand had provided them, they prepared to adventure.

Patelina took leave of her new lover through a flood of tears; *he* next went down to lead off the attention of the centinel, as they were lowering themselves from the window.

Florimund arose to descend first, that he might be ready below to break the fall of either of the others, should they quit their hold, or any otherwise meet with an accident.

Fortune favoured them: under cover of the darkness of the night, and Bertrand's engaging the centinel in conversation at the other end of the terrace, they reached the ground in safety, though with palpitating hearts.

It now became our hero's study the

stratagem they must employ to escape pursuit, and, above all, what disguise they should next assume to avoid the appearance of what report might represent.

## CHAP. X.

"Some when transformed, fix in the lasting change;
Some with more right through various figures range;
Proteus, thus large thy privilege, was found,
Thou inmate of the seas which earth surround."

VERNON'S OVID.

"Shall I tell thee love,
I could not leave this honest wench behind
And sleep in quiet. She is humble born,
But trust me, christian, I do see no cause
Why I should blush in feeling for the lowly."

COLMAN.

PROVIDENCE, that never forsakes the just in time of need (though they, as well as the wicked, receive their share of vicissitude by way of purgation) conduct-

ed the lovers with Patelina to a spot where a band of those wanderers had passed the night, who, in unenlightened times, would wound and disfigure themselves to excite the compassion of their fellow creatures, or failing in that, extort it by bans and threats.

They had kindled a fire there to sleep by during the night, and on their departure left behind them a parcel of tattered garments, which exactly supplied the purpose of a disguise for the three, who were before habited as pilgrims. Their present garments they concealed in a hollow tree, and (the proper punctilios of modesty abided by), without ceremony they adopted the appearance of those who had preceded them.

"Did we not thus conceal our pilgrim's habits," remarked Florimund, "others, by the assumption of them, might be secured and perish innocently

for our transgressions. The God that watches over the innocent man suffering under the event of circumstance forbid it.

The escape of the prisoners was discovered early next morning, and for several days they were obliged to conceal themselves in hollow trees and caves, and only venture out at night, living upon berries, wild fruits, and the like. With some of these they at last so contrived to stain their faces, which, together with their uncouth appearance, rendered discovery next to a miracle.

One night, having taken shelter beneath the projection of a rocky eminence and kindled a fire, they were accosted by those in pursuit, with inquiries if they had ever met in their wanderings any thing like a description they gave them. The evasion they were compelled to practise was successful, and their pursuers went on their way.

Thus, day by day in solitary round, but happy in each other's society, and not forgetting sometimes to jest as well as console with Patelina about her lover, they looked forward to the day that chance would confirm their innocence, and the church unite them in the bonds of connubial happiness.

In their peregrinations they arrived at the ruins of Ravenswold, and having learnt of the surrounding vassals Ethelbald had not since been heard of, they were astonished, and wondered when the multiplied horrors of these towers would cease.

They determined on making this rude shelter their abode for a time, as they would at least have the satisfaction of indulging their reflections on the many happy as well as miserable hours they had witnessed within its walls.

Here they kindled the cheering blaze,

here they partook of their refreshment, and here Florimund began to number the days of their retirement and exile.

The appearance of lights among the ruins gave the distant vassalage occasion to believe the place was still frequented by supernatural visitors, and none dared venture near the spot.

One very calm evening however as Florimund was wandering amid the desolate walls and towering arches of this sequestered place, he thought at a distance he beheld a human form in silent reverie. It was now dusk, the sun had sunk below the horizon, and the rumbling surge was heard to beat against the adjoining coast that obstructed it: the raven still made the ruins of the wold her asylum, and Nyctimenè shrieked among the sedge of some of its loftier and shattered towers.

He paused awhile to observe the

figure; presently perceiving it in motion, he advanced; again it was stationary, and as he again stood to observe it, his ears were accosted with the following soliloquy.

"What are all the lofty deeds of man! what are thrones, and what are empires! These stupendous and frowning towers were destroyed in one night by the power of a single destructive element, whereon the labour of several thousand hands was employed whole years to erect. The throne of our kingdom was divided by the fate of a single battle, and half the portion of this sea-girt isle given to the sway of a bold invader. Hail, sullen silence! whilst I adore that awful being who is the giver and destroyer of all earthly things, that God who sits triumphant in the heavens to govern all beneath, around whose throne myriads of celestial messengers await, and at whose

foot kings and nations bow in everlasting adoration; choirs of angels sing his eternal praise, and whole armies of martyrs shout his awful omnipotence. He it was who first called the world out of chaos, and breathed his eternal spirit through creation; he it was that divided the elements, and he it is can command their final dissolution. 'Thou spirit that dost prefer before all temples the upright heart and pure,' hear me I entreat; here would I build up to thee another tower, a tower no time can annihilate from the treasure of a pure unsullied conscience; here would I offer the sacrifice of a contrite heart. For the terrestrial lord of this abode (whom I still believe harmless and abused,) fain would I supplicate; deliver him from the hands of merciless men, punish them according to their deserts, and enable him to raise again this noble struc-

ture, and live hereafter in peace and thy important service."

He was turning to advance towards that part of the ruins where Florimund stood, but perceiving our hero he vanished, and all endeavours to solicit his return were vain.

"Can it be possible," exclaims Florimund; "it was the voice of the Earl's faithful domestic Harold."

He returned to Adeliza, and informed her of what he had seen and heard. After some little time had elapsed, seated round the blaze in patient conversation, they were again alarmed by the noise of several voices in another part of the place.

Florimund looked out and beheld father Ambrose, Gerald, and four other of the domestics, with torches exploring the ruins; their conversation ran thus:—

"You tell me," says the friar, "I am

more alarmed at spiritual appearances than any of the rest of you. How can that be with me, who am myself a minister of the spirit. I mean the good spirit; and that it is in my power to quiet any thing that is of evil you shall have ocular proof."

"I cannot laugh," mutters Gerald, "after what has happened, and I have done little else than weep since the late dreadful catastrophe and mysterious loss of the Earl. Every part of these melancholy ruins remind me of him, and the many happy days I have spent beneath his roof—Lack-a-day! all is fled—all is over, and (to use a familiar phrase) all vanished in smoke!"

The other domestics, who were with them, expressed likewise their sorrow and regret.

"Many a time," continues Gerald, "have I sat at the old oak table, and

kept the family in a roar; many a time had my joke on the comical figures carved about the wood-work; many a time played at 'hunt the slipper,' and kissed the little rogues under the mizzletoe, ha, ha! —but *I cannot laugh now, I have lost my noble master.*"

"I imagine we shall meet no spirits here," interrupts the friar; "we had best go home, it is growing cold; I am quite chilly, and my knees knock together."

"Ah," returns Gerald, "you begin to be afraid again; I see how it is, but I cannot think how people can be frightened that have never done any harm."

Florimund resolved they should not make themselves known to the present group.

"Frightened," vociferates the friar in a passion, that at the moment dissipated his fears, "you urge that to anger, which

ought to be the pattern of patience—Holy St. Anthony, my very blood boils! We cannot speak of ghosts but you tell me I am the first that is alarmed, and if I complain of cold and my whole frame is trembling, you tell me it is fear. By the fire of the holy saint I have just invoked, I am hot enough now; and the first that dares tell me to my face I am afraid again shall be sent to *limbo*—the devil, the devil, the devil!" he concluded, and rushed out of the ruins.

What had so alarmed the friar at the close of his speech was Florimund, who snatching up a firebrand, that glared upon his many coloured face as he made his appearance, induced this hypocritical priest to believe it was Satan himself that stopped the way.

Gerald and the rest, not so much alarmed, advanced and questioned our hero as to his origin.

He informed them, in a feigned voice, he was only a poor pilgrim without a home, who with his two companions were making their way through this world in search of a better; that they had taken shelter there for a time, and if he was of the nobler order of society, they hoped he would have the kindness to contribute to their next day's sustenance.

Gerald could not help smiling at the event of their visit to the ruins of Ravenswold—"So," he remarks to his fellows, "what has thus alarmed the country round, with lights and what not, that have been seen here, are only three poor tattered mendicants going round the world begging their bread—ha, ha, ha! but *I must not laugh after what has happened.* Contribute to your next day's sustenance, certainly I will; I have a bottle in my pocket, and a cake that may likewise

cheer you now; you are welcome to them."

So saying he took them out, and gave them, bidding them at the same time a good night, and invoking heaven's protection in their favour.

"Ha, ha, ha! what are we to think of father Ambrose now, he mumbles as he retired—' *the first that dares tell me to my face I am afraid again shall be sent to limbo. The devil, the devil, the devil!*' Ha, ha, ha!—*but I cannot laugh now, I have lost my noble master!*"

## CHAP. XI.

"Life of my life, and charmer of my heart,
From these embraces let us never part."

LANSDOWN.

"Never, O never.—In some safe retreat,
Far from the noise and tumult of the great,
Secure and happy on each other's breast,
Within each other's arms we'll ever rest."

IBID.

At this time, from the peculiar incidents we have related, and others that must come to light at the close of this narrative, not only the state, but also the

country at large, were involved in consternation and alarm.

Every means were set on foot to discover the latent cause of so much calamity, as of late it was not individuals alone that suffered, but, the very basis of the throne itself.

On Gerald's promise to afford the lovers and their attendants assistance next day, Florimund thought it would be policy to quit their present shelter for a time, to avoid discovery, and return again as it might be deemed proper.

They were looking about for a place whereon to rest, the next evening and chanced to fall in company with an old man, who was kind enough to offer them accommodation under the roof of his hovel. Florimund, after what they had experienced of strangers, would have refused his kind offer, but found from

his voice it was the identical Harold, though under the appearance of a hermit.

After the dreadful calamity of the fall of Ravenswood, the loss of the Earl, and the foregoing events that had, in so mysterious a manner, transpired, he resolved on quitting society and passing the remainder of his days as recluse as might suit his inclination. He had ever indulged in contemplation, and it was in one of these moods he visited the ruins which drew from him those reflections, of which our hero had been a witness.

They accompanied him to his hovel or cell; it was a place of his own contriving, composed of spars, hurdles, turf, and thatched very neatly over with the coarser sort of heath. It was not till after they entered this habitation, and had been some time seated, that Florimund opened their condition.

The surprise and joy expressed by Harold, may be better conceived than described.

After they had partaken of the best his cell afforded, Harold desired their attention to a most afflicting detail of particulars, that will begin to open to our readers the intricate compound of this narration.

He began by stating to them, he trusted he need not repeat the whole story of his faithful services to the Earl, that they were already, for the most part, in possession of; but begin from the time the sun of triumph and tranquillity no longer shed its rays on Ravenswold's Towers, but was succeeded by the overwhelming clouds of affliction and jealousy, with the calamity that followed.

Never were those ornaments of a country, the united dignity of title, honor, courage, charity, love, and hospitality

more nobly displayed than they were at Ravenswold, before the arrival of Florimund, and the consequent change, (from insidious proceedings against him,) that afterwards arose in the bosom of the Earl. —— "That green-eyed monster, Jealousy, that makes the meat it feeds on," rushed upon his soul, and his whole frame afterwards became the temple of confusion.

Whatever might have been the hellish contrivance that first gave rise to such suggestions, the Earl was best acquainted with, but Harold was satisfied of Gunilda's innocence, and also of the party's whom Ethelbald supposed had stepped between him and his supreme affections.

Suffice it to say, one unhappy circumstance produced another, which, together with Wolfred's arrival, at length put the Earl on the fatal determination of destroying his virtuous consort.

For this purpose he adjourned to his romantic residence in the Isle of Wight, to which place it had been the lot of Harold to follow him.

On his arrival he received the afflicting intelligence of three ruffians having dragged away Gunilda: he rushed from the place in pursuit of them, and directed by the noise of a clashing of swords, which proceeded from one of the three wishing to preserve her life, he arrived, alas, to wound the very being who strove to be her protector.

Whilst Harold was engaged in the contest, the other two availed themselves of an opportunity of seizing on their victim, and hurling her over the cliff into the sea, which dreadful deed having perpetrated, they escaped through the darkness of the night.

The other, wounded and lying on the ground, implored for mercy, which being

at the moment granted him, he informed Harold they had been employed by Wolfred and the Earl to accomplish this bloody deed, but that he had resolved on saving her life. This fellow's restoration became afterwards the especial care of Harold, privately, and more may be heard of him towards the sequel of these adventures.

He prevailed on Harold to descend the cliff immediately, by the first track he could arrive at, and satisfy himself of the fate of Gunilda; as it was not so lofty there as at some other points of the island, there yet might be hopes of preserving her life, providing the sea did not flow close up to its base.

Having bound up the poor wretches arm, he proceeded to descend the craggy eminence, and at a little distance off perceived, by the assistance of the moon, that half displayed her light through the

hazy clouds that enveloped her, two persons alighting from a boat; he advanced to the spot, and to his transported senses found—Gunilda was alive!!

It was a poor old fisherman, who, (though the waves had received her), snatched her from this untimely and watery grave. She did not recover till after they had borne her to his hut, to which place also they conducted the person that had encountered Harold. The other two fled the island to avoid discovery.

Harold afterwards blinded the Earl and Wolfred with the fictitious report of her death, and as soon as an opportunity transpired, contrived to place her, with every necessary comfort, in the north tower, which gave rise to the various reports of that part of the castle being troubled with lights and strange appearances.

As this faithful fellow was waiting the event of a proper hour, again to restore Gunilda to the arms of her deceived Lord, the poor old fisherman, destined her preserver, took his departure to that abode where all labours cease, all tempests die, and the roaring of the waters could no longer trouble him.

Having no relation that he knew of, his little store he left to his wounded companion, who afterwards departed to England, with an engagement to Harold, he would come forward at any appointed time he might be summoned.

Thus had Harold waited with the most poignant anxiety, amidst the strange events that followed, in hopes that time would elucidate the dark misunderstandings that prevailed—still every thing had rendered expectation hopeless. It was Gunilda herself that appeared to Adeliza, but retired, hearing the footsteps of Pate-

lina, and when the castle was in flames it was she who really passed the Earl to make her escape from the fury of the devouring element.

"But what became of her after that fatal night?" they all eagerly enquired, as if touched by the same instinctive impulse.—"Is she alive?"

"She is! she is! but when, alas! she might, perhaps, be vindicated and acknowledged innocent, her deceived Lord is dragged away by traitors and outlaws, and has, perhaps, 'ere this, suffered a miserable death."

"But where, where is the wronged Gunilda?" asks Florimund.

"I have her here," replies Harold.

"Oh, bring her to us," exclaims Adelizia, "that I may kiss the tear from off her aged cheek, and comfort her as she has fostered me."

"I will," cries the faithful vassal, "but learn, before I introduce her, she is in disguise."

He retired into the back part of the cell, opened a small wicket, and solicited his much wronged mistress to make her appearance.

No one came forward, nor was any reply heard from within; again he solicited her approach, all was silent still; he entered the recess, but immediately returning, he exclaimed, with the most heart-felt agony, "Good God, she has fled!" and sank senseless.

Presently recovering, they endeavoured to console him, by insinuating she might have wandered forth to taste the refreshing breezes of the evening; this somewhat composed him and he resumed his seat.

No sooner had this happened than the

approach of several horsemen with torches, was perceived from the mouth of the cell. On their arrival they enquired loudly for Harold, the domestic of Earl Ethelbald; they informed him they were dispatched from the court of the King, Canute, on matters of the highest importance; they possessed proper documents of their authority, and amongst other evidences of blood and guilt, produced the very dagger found in the hovel of the two miscreants, Florimund had left behind in prison.

This greatly agitated him, as it did Adeliza and her follower; but on the chief messenger demanding a separate conversation with Harold, they were allowed to retire and await the issue of this intercourse without.

What the event of it was will be found hereafter, and we now beg leave to con-

duct our readers to the cavern of the man in the iron mask, where the major part of the circumstances that make up the burthen of this relation will be brought to an end.

## CHAP. XII.

"A dungeon horrible on all sides round."

MILTON.

——"How we may henceforth most offend
Our enemy, our own loss how repair,
How overcome this dire calamity;
What reinforcement we may gain from hope,
If not, what resolution from despair."

IBID.

PREPARATIONS of the most horrible kind were made within the dark abode of that mysterious being, whose features had hitherto been concealed from the

Earl beneath the specious covering of the iron mask. He was now about to throw it aside, declare himself to his enemy, and take that dreadful measure of satisfaction which, (to the choleric man,) alone seems ample to the injuries he has received.

Around the craggs of the cavern were arranged the implements of destruction they had taken, at different times, of those with whom they had encountered; and here and there hung the skeleton of such as had made the most desperate resistance, and on whom they had sought revenge for insults offered them before they resigned themselves to a life of libertinism. Instruments of torture were placed in view, to terrify the unfortunate Earl; strange figures carved around, and rude transparencies displayed. The table, which was placed down the middle of the cave, was covered with a black

cloth, on the corners of which were coarsely embroidered in scarlet and gold, a death's head and bones, and at the top was placed a scull, with its appendages, by the side of which lay the sword of their leader, on which they had all seperately sworn fidelity to each other, even in the jaws of death.

Furbrand's chair, which was placed at the upper end, was covered with a display of horrible emblems, in black, scarlet, green, and gold; and from the top of this subterraneous abode hung a lamp of most wonderful and terrific singularity. By pulling a wire that hung down by the robber's chair, that had communication with it, the place became, as it were, one complete sheet of blue fire, and rendered the countenances of those around most terrible to behold.

Some of the robbers now entered dragging in an old hag, whom they swore they

would crown as their protector, or evil genius; they were sure she possessed supernatural powers, for nothing in nature had they ever seen of so haggard an appearance.

Her grey hairs almost covered her face, had they not, it was scarcely to be perceived beneath a sort of cap, composed of stuffed snakes and hedge-hogs' skins; she was likewise clad in those of wolves, wild cats, and the like, and walked literally barefoot.

"Ho!" cries their leader, as he entered, "what have you there?—her looks betoken witchcraft, and I fear her presence bodes us no good.—Whence did she come?"

"Captain," replies one of the robbers, "we dragged her from her lurking place, on the borders of the forest; we are convinced she is possessed of the

power to thwart us, as all our expeditions that way have proved unsuccessful."

"Then why bring her hither?"

"To force her to exercise her skill in our behalf, and request you will appoint her the guardian spirit of our cave."

"It may be so hereafter.—What has she to say for herself?"

"She will not speak a word, though we have threatened instant death at her refusal."

"Away with her for the present, and confine her in the back cavern. Bring forth, in her place, that extraordinary creature we encountered in a late sally, and let me now see what can be made of her by investigation."

"Why, to tell you the truth, Captain, it seems this visit to our noble habitation has brought her to her senses, and I should not wonder if, by this time, she had

fallen in love with some of our amiable faces."

"Ha!—No one has dared to trifle with the wretch in my absence?"

"That I cannot answer to, Captain.—By her own account she has been a fine lady in her time; she talks of her former grandeur, her equipage, her lover, and the devil does not know what besides."

"Explain more fully," cries Furbrand.

"Why, Captain, I am not much of a hand at a melancholy story, but she tells us her lover was a warrior; that he was very much abused by his superiors in some way or another, and that when she attempted to interest herself in his behalf all did not turn out so well as she could wish. I am not apt to blubber at trifles, but upon my soul she brought the water up in my eyes."

"Leave me to my own reflections for a while," returns the Captain, agitated

" and bid my friend Wolfred prepare to attend me on the final business that must ensue."

" What can this mean," mutters Ironmask to himself: " the story too so like. —I could have hoped this weakness had been subdued within me, but when I think of the loss I sustained in my Corrina it still comes over me, hardened as my heart now is, and sinks my soul in sadness. To what desperation may not the malignant insult of our fellow man drive us, in this wilderness of affliction; and the keener our feelings the more powerfully will such insult operate. I know forgiveness of injury is a quality we should all acknowledge, but when I reflect on what have been my privations and unparalleled sufferings without the slightest offence before offered to my oppressors—my spirit cries revenge!—Re-

venge is in my power, and this night will I exercise it upon that being who, feeling himself my superior, dared oppress me with his power, and, trusting in his own security, sought exultingly to strike me down, never to rise again.—-Yet, hold; my curiosity is roused by what I have just heard, and must be satisfied.—Let me have an interview with Wolfred—within there! request lord Wolfred to come to me."

One of the robbers having announced the same to Wolfred, (who was in another apartment of the cavern) he shortly made his appearance.

"Well, my Lord, you see the preparation we have made for this night's *entertainment,* and you will shortly hear a more minute account of all those wrongs and infringements that first drove me from the world to seek an asylum with

the mole, and bid farewell to that sun which lastly sat on my calamity: if you have scruples name them; you best know the grounds you have for seconding my proceedings, for, mark me, this night my wounded spirit, now driven desperate, calls loudly for retribution."

"Take it! Talk not to me of scruples; I am too far waded in iniquity to think of returning.—My pride must be gratified, and my foolish brother has not only stood before me in possession, but eclipsed my name altogether; in brief, I have a thousand reasons to wish him in the next world, besides that of adding his share of enjoyments to my own in this."

The picture of these two men in secret levee, exhibited the appearance of a great mind driven to desperation, and a contrary one desperate in ambition, as

second childhood will toy with infancy, and both alike be gratified.

"Well, then," continues Firebrand, "you must consent to be brought in as my prisoner, with others, that the surprise of the Earl may be the greater; no punishment on this side death can be adequate to the sorrow he has consigned me to."

"To that I willingly consent, and would my fellow, Barbold, was but here to witness the scene."

"I could have wished that myself.—— After the events of this night, and your departure, we must again remove; for though I could place my life in any of my bold associates' hands, still, death is the touchstone that tries the stoutest heart, and it would ill become me hereafter, should we be taken, to have no other redress than that of exclaiming, 'I have put too much confidence in man.'"

"You are perfectly right; but come, let us lose no time, away with reflection and proceed to business."

"We will. I have but to examine a singular sort of being we fell in with some nights back—a maniac; but who, since her confinement here, I am informed, has been restored. Indeed, it is a doubt to me whether she was ever deranged at all, by her shrewd manner of dealing with us. An assumption of that malady is sometimes used as a cloak to escape persecution; but the event will shew.—Retire, my Lord, I will send for you anon, with the rest of the prisoners."

Wolfred retired, but not till he had again taken Furbrand by the hand, to assure him of his sincerity; this the robber would have derided, had he not known his present situation ensured it.

Furbrand now summoned two of the

banditti to bring the female who called herself Winifred, into his presence.

They retired, and he again began to ruminate. After pacing the cavern two or three times across, he thus observed again: "What can it mean? I feel at this moment a sort of pressure, a heavy foreboding of something unusual that is about to happen. I would not yield to such a foolish impulse, yet much I fear I cannot shake it off—away with superstition! Oh, my Corrina, once the idol of my affections; she, alas, is vanished, and in such a way as alone induces me to remain here an hour behind her. Oh! when I reflect upon the fate and termination of her ill-starred life, and the villany that was put in force to accomplish it, I am hurried from myself; and nothing can or ever shall content me, but the final blow."

The two robbers were now conducting poor Winifred to the Captain. As they advanced she averted her face, and seemed unwilling to approach.

"Fear not," cries Furbrand, "I mean to give you liberty, but first inform me who and what you are?"

"Oh! I am most unfortunate. Where I am I know not; but were you acquainted with the wrongs I have hitherto received," she answers, "I trust you would not seek to add to my affliction."

As she pronounced these last words she cast her eyes pitifully on Furbrand, who suddenly became agitated to an extreme degree; as soon as he had power to articulate he eagerly asks, "Are not those the features of my Corrina?"

"Ha!" exclaims the poor heart-rended wanderer, "Is that the voice of my Athelstan?"

"It is! it is!—Shall I be happy yet?"

"My Athelstan, indeed! Then are we blest at last!"

With these words they rushed impetuously into each other's arms.

"Let loose the winds of heaven," he cries, exultingly, "and let them tear whole forests by the roots—let vivid lightnings sear the earth around, and the hoarse thunder shake this concave through—let earthquakes sever the great world in twain, and tyrants trample still; I do not heed them! Corrina lives, and all our sorrows cease. But say, my love," he continues, lifting his mask with one hand, as he supported her on the arm of the other, "say what have been thy sufferings?"

"They have been great, but I cannot remember," she feebly lisps; "farewell! —I have not time to tell—a sudden sickness seizes me—I faint—I die content—

oh!"——The effect of so unexpected a meeting, on the weak state of her frame, was more than she could support, and with a heavy sigh she yielded her existence.

The robber eagerly tore the mask over his countenance again——astonishment choaked his utterance, and he stood over her as one horror-struck.

## CHAP. XIII.

"Of good and evil much he argued next,
Of happiness and final misery,
Passion and apathy, glory and shame;
Vain wisdom all and false philosophy:
Yet, with a pleasing sorcery, could charm
Pain for awhile, or anguish, and excite
Fallacious hope!"

MILTON.

THE miserable and unfortunate being in the Iron Mask having recovered from his stupor, rage and fury possessed him. "Assemble," he cries, "ye men of steel, whose hearts are tempered with adamant,

bring forth the prisoners, but above all my victim. Here let us imitate the spirit of the Romans, and harangue over that body dear to us when living, till 'the hot shafts of our avenging spirit' strike the fell tyrant down."

The body of his unfortunate Corrina was placed before him on the table, he ascended the chair of his malignant state, the prisoners were brought in, the banditti arranged themselves on each side the table, and Ethelbald again stood before them.

"Ha, ha!" he exclaims in a voice of thunder, that shook the cavern to its base, "you are here again—look to it—yes, *again*; here for the *last time*. See there, my friends, (whose hearts are sincere, and whose courage was never doubted), behold that sight (pointing to Corrina), which was once the dearest object

of my life; torn from me first by that pitiful instrument of official prerogative, and but just now returned to me —returned, alas! but to perish in my arms."

Ethelbald was about to speak.

"Not a word! no plea is left you. Whilst exulting in your own fancied magnanimity you heeded not the supplications of him who now sits your judge; your power was arbitrary, so shall be my decision. If we are not all born to the same superior station, we are entitled to experience an equal share of humanity, and the wretch who, under the protection of regal power, dares wilfully oppress and deny the justice of the law to his inferiors, becomes a rebel to the commonweal and merits the punishment of an outlaw; that punishment you may expect. If living under regal sway, con-

tent to be governed by that code of laws which is held forth to us, we find our rights infringed upon, and of its administration can obtain neither hearing nor redress—we are no longer, in the eye of heaven, subservient to that regal power, the code is broken, and the very administration itself becomes rebellious. Were the subject serving under such sway to commit the first breach, he of course would suffer, and in case of rebellion perhaps without judge or jury; then if those who undertake to make and administer restrictions are the first themselves to break them, by refusing satisfaction to the injured that seek it, all earthly jurisdiction is void; and fatal may be the consequences that ensue.

The language of the enraged leader astonished the Earl; he appeared lost

to what it applied; still he was forbidden to speak, and the robber proceeded.

The power of arms may subvert justice, and supply in its place a specious shew of law that should be nominated tyranny, and thus subdue the more passive members of society; but truth will ever raise up superior minds, who, if they cannot altogether subdue that force, will volunteer their lives in the cause of goodness and their suffering fellow men, to restrain the evil prerogative and keep that tyranny in awe. You know me not, but shall soon be made to remember. I am now about to tear away the barrier that obstructs your recognition, and though affliction and severity may so far have altered my features, my name must still be fresh in your remembrance. Thus then I proclaim myself, (taking

off his mask); you may not recognize my face, but to that let me add the appellation of the injured Athelstan!"

The Earl started at the name; but *Wolfred appeared far more agitated*, and leant on one of the prisoners for support.

"Aye, well you may start, and tremble too; for ere long your sentence will be death!

"You may remember when I first followed arms beneath your banners, and served my king and country honourably as became a soldier: my father, who was not born among hinds (though they alike deserve our notice and protection), had fallen in battle some years before; to me he bequeathed his laurels and his sword. Then I possessed a heart open to my fellow man, and my honour has never

forsaken me. Still there was a mother to whom I was affectionate, and a being that enslaved my adoration; in my mind she surpassed even angels! good God, how I loved her—that being now behold!"

Here as he paused and gazed on the lifeless form of Corrina, a single tear (like that which stood in the eye of Telemachus as he addressed his heroic countrymen in behalf of his father) dropped from his cheek on the table: he had almost forgot to weep, for all his grief was inwards,

"Shame on this weakness," he exclaimed to himself, as he wiped away the second, and forbad a third to follow. "'Tis past, 'tis gone, and I must now forget her. Revenge! yes, yes, it must be so; let friars cant, and fools forget oppression, but let those who have suffer-

ed as I have done, and feel as I now feel, down with fanaticism, and exclaim 'Revenge!!'

You may recollect I had a friend, and an early one, and it too often happens that the friendships we form, before experience has taught us how to choose, turn out in time the source of our undoing; so did it mine. This *friend*, if I dare call him so, sought the seduction of my beloved; I discovered it, and demanded satisfaction. He was my superior officer, and refused it me, which I resented by pronouncing him a coward. One day in the open field he struck me before my inferiors; fired at the advantage he had taken, I seized him by the throat, and treated him as his deserts merited.

"To his complaints the military law attended, but all my applications were

fruitless; he suborned false witness, I was punished with disgrace and thrown into confinement; that wretch, my victim, that arbitrary judge presided over all. Immured in a dungeon, my faithful Corrina petitioned for access to visit and console me in my affliction. Her beauty I was informed caught the eye of this proud Earl Ethelbald, and he was determined to enjoy her. The next charge preferred against me by some one unknown was that of treason and conspiracy against the Saxon line, and a sworn league with the Danes; falsely was it urged, and falsely supported, but so powerfully was the charge preferred against me, I could not resist its fallacious force, nor did that malicious judge, I believe, design that I ever should do so.

"About this time much treason pre-

vailed: I was adjudged to death, an awaited in my solitary cell the execution of my sentence. In this situation I was often visited by the different officers of Ethelbald, and amongst the rest his own brother Wolfred, who is now present, and has yet to answer for himself. He professed much regret for my degraded situation, and often came to commiserate with me. Of him I learnt the strange intelligence that steeled my heart to pity, and drove me to swear, should I ever escape, eternal hatred to the man you see.

"My mother, my poor afflicted mother! hearing of my sentence travelled barefoot several leagues to petition in my behalf, but finding she could not obtain a hearing, or even a sight of me, she threatened in a paroxysm of grief to go and throw herself before the king; from

that she was prevented, and fell a victim to her maternal endeavours before she escaped the camp by the hands of assassins, and all petitions either to Ethelbald or my king were now shut out.

"At length, Almighty Powers! how shall I relate it? My Corrina came to supplicate. Though age could find no admittance to the pompous presence of this ignoble commander, youth and beauty could. She was refused admittance to the place of my confinement, but as I learnt received a solemn promise my life should be spared on conditions—(oh, hell! my blood boils when I repeat it)---on conditions she would yield herself over, for a certain stipulated time, to the gratification of his infernal desires. This she refused, and sought again a parting interview with me, hoping thereby to find

an easier way to happiness—a sweet asylum for us both in death. It was again denied her; after her departure she was once more summoned to attend this lascivious miscreant in his tent, and receive, as he insinuated, the reward of her transcendant virtue, namely, my liberty, and a restoration of my rank and honours, the charges having been since her last interview discovered to be fallacious. She attended at the appointed hour, as she expected, the throne of mercy, but found it, alas! the temple of pollution! Like the tiger of the desert he rushed upon his prey, and issued orders for my death to succeed, this diabolical act of perfidy, the very next morning."

Ethelbald again strove to be heard, but was prevented.

"Fortunately I found friends where I least expected, which is very often the case

in the hour of jeopardy: for those who assume the warmth of friendship in prosperity are the first to abandon us in time of need, whilst it is the task of sincerity privately to do good without a public profession of it.

"They were, *indeed*, my friends, the guard that watched over me; they aided my escape, and to this moment have never quitted my side: they are now sitting at the table.

Grief (as I have since discovered from a soldier of the camp I had the misfortune to meet with) at length drove the poor creature you see stretched before us wild; she was then thrust forth by her ravisher, and became the sport of the whole camp. What appeared every one's care was no one's consideration, and polluted and abandoned she issued forth into this wild wilderness of

sorrow to wander in desolation unprotected.

From that moment I applied myself to the means of obtaining this great, this terrible satisfaction. For which purpose I commenced many stratagems, that only gave you a temporary uneasiness, and for several years indulged my eyes and heart with the idea of the potent gratification they should one day experience. On your return from battle I became more industrious. Your two minstrels were *two of my banditti*—observe them there; your Osric of the cave behold in *me;* I discovered your disposition and directed *the epistle* to be dropped signed Florimund. It is *I* that have secretly exulted in the fever of your imagination; I *surprised Adeliza* in your absence from the castle; it was *your minstrels* that buried the whole family in sleep; it was *I*

that roused you from your lethargy, and afterwards bore away prisoner your brother Wolfred: in the metropolis *I* watched unknown your *every step*—I sought to secure you on your return—*I* directed the two minstrels deputed to *fire the castle*, and it is *I* that must at *one blow* level the *wretch* who has doomed *me and mine to countless misery!* therefore prepare!!"

At that very instant soldiers who had found their way in every direction from some kind of information, rushed in upon them.

The chief of these pursuers, from the information of Harold, advanced and seized on Wolfred as *a traitor to the state*, and one of the rebel lords concerned in *the assassination of King Edmund Ironside.*

The party were numerous, and the robbers taken too much by surprise to

admit of their making the slightest resistance. Barbold, (who had been taken prisoner) to obtain the pardon of Canute, had thus betrayed their abode, and given the necessary information to secure them without danger. Athelstan was suspected of being concerned with Wolfred in effecting the death of the king; and the bloody poniard was produced, on the handle of which stood *the name* of Wolfred.

"Then all is lost," complains the latter. "Well, well, we can but die; but before we depart, let me undeceive this most unfortunate leader respecting his challenge on my brother—*he is innocent*, and *concerning his wife*, it seems, *very much deceived*. It was *I* that became enamoured of Corrina, and as such on *me* it is you must heap the blame and weight of all your affliction."

"Is it even so!" ejaculates the robber;

"then may I at last with propriety exclaim '*I have put too much confidence in man!*' It is enough: all I loved is fled—I am betrayed by the weakness of another, and he who wrought the sum of my misfortunes is out of the reach of my revenge. Well, well, my Corrina, we may meet again, if there be another world, and I rest well assured, that should there, it cannot be a worse than this. Noble Earl, forgive me" (to Ethelbald).

As the soldiers now advanced to lay hands on him—"Stand off," he exclaims, "and let me once more clasp her in my arms," so saying, he embraced the dead body of Corrina, then drawing his sword, "let me avenge at one blow thy injuries and my own;" with that he made a plunge at Wolfred, only wounding him slightly as the sword was wrested from his hand. Finding he was thus foiled, he leaped upon the table, and exultingly

cried, "there yet is one way left, and that shall end my woes;" then plunging a poniard in his breast, and bidding his associates farewell, in an hysteric laugh he sank backwards, and with a heavy groan expired.

## CHAP. XIV.

——————"Feeble man calls out
For ev'ry bauble, drivelled o'er by sense."

YOUNG.

——————"Say, Sages! say,
Wits, oracles! say, dreamers of gay dreams!
How will you weather an eternal night
Where such expedients fail? Where wit's a fool,
Mirth mourns, dreams vanish, laughter drops a tear."

IBID.

THE bodies of Athelstan and Corrina were buried near the spot, a stake drove over them, to which a board was affixed, that announced to the passing

traveller of the waste their destiny and fall.

The rest were conducted to their trial, and the fiend Wolfred obtained the death he merited: he was sentenced, amongst others with whom he had been concerned, to suffer decapitation, and their heads afterwards placed, as a public spectacle, on some of the loftiest buildings of the metropolis.

The robbers were likewise condemned, and suffered according to the judgment pronounced, and the domestics, who were taken prisoners, liberated.

The old man Harbold, who with his son Gilbert, were also brought to trial, proved to be the very two employed, with the third, who had undertaken the death of Gunilda; they escaped the present charge, but received sentence for other crimes they had been guilty of, and perished with the rest.

The other, who strove for her safety, and who came to England after the death of the poor fisherman, was found to be Patelina's lover, who attended on the trial, and to whom she was afterwards happily united.

Ethelbald was acquitted of every thing, his complaints heard, and such redress promised as he required. The Earl retired to the castle that had been Wolfred's, to which place Bertrand and Patelina accompanied him.

Florimund and Adeliza, who had accompanied Harold to the cave, were extolled by all the nobility of the land, and on their return to Sullenbourn united by the solemnization of marriage, with a promise from the Earl, as soon as Ravenswold Castle was rebuilt, he would bequeath them what had been Wolfred's possessions, and the ample means of their maintenance and dignity.

This they both refused, unless the Earl would admit of the castle receiving another appellation; he willingly consented, and it was named Grovesland.

The denomination concluded on, arose out of a circumstance we trust cannot fail of giving our readers additional satisfaction. A certain personage of note, who was on the trial and who accompanied the Earl to his residence, proved to be the father of our hero, (his mother was also living to behold him,) and he it was subscribed that name. This was discovered by a mark the alarm of nature had given him on the forehead. He was stolen from his parents in his infancy by the wandering tribe, and as soon as he came of years sufficient to fly from them, had taken up and ever since followed arms.

Such a meeting the reader may bet-

ter conceive than we attempt to describe.

One thing alone remains to place the decrees of Providence in their proper light; that Providence, though often slow in judgment is ever transcendent in mercy, one thing alone remains to prove the abused Earl was brought again to happiness—the restoration of her he adored. What is become of the hag of the cave, the witch of the wilds, the robber's sport, the creature hidden under the cover of savage animals? We answer, *she was the virtuous Gunilda!!*

Here let us pause, and reflect on the omnipotence of that God who could bring about such miracles, and who sooner or later calls good forth out of evil, and rewards the helpless animal man according to his works.

Harold, the faithful Harold, received

the thanks and the reward of the Earl, and the blessings of every one. The vassals of Ethelbald were summoned to Grovesland, and preparations made to celebrate the lovers' nuptials with joy, and the Earl's triumph with solemnity.

Father Ambrose officiated, and we believe (every one's adventures fairly displayed, and all mysteries unravelled), he began more seriously to weigh the importance of his holy function, and buried with his earthly fears his vile hypocrisy.

"Ha, ha, ha," mutters Gerald (who must ever be forcing in a word, even if it were edgeways), "all is right at last. I always told the friar there was no spirit in the castle worse than his own."

"Nay, fie!" remarks Earl Alfred, the father of Florimund, "what! abuse the priest on my son's wedding day?"

"And are you then really the father of him who is so great a favourite among us?—I sincerely beg you will spare me; but I must speak my mind, were it in a church—ha, ha, ha!"

"Pardon him, my Lord," interrupts Ethelbald, "he is old, and grey hairs are honourable."

"Fear me not," replies his Lordship.

Barbold escaped on the advantage of his evidence, but shortly after met an untimely end.

Ethelbald and Gunilda (attended by Earl Alfred), Florimund and Adeliza, and a crowd of nobles and their ladies, now adjourned to the grand banquetting hall: the lofty trumpet sounded their arrival, the feast was properly conducted, and heaven and earth seemed to unite in the cheerful sounds of harmony displayed by the minstrels. Let it not wound the feelings of the very refined, if

we add Patelina and her Bertrand, with the whole round of domestics were all happy in their sphere.

Thus they were restored to tranquillity, and thus we bid them farewell.

---

LET those who feel they are struggling with the spirit of *ambition*, and grasping with an evil hand at the wealth, the toys and pleasures of this life, beware to what fatal steps their proud aims may conduct them; and learn from this, our narrative, to stop short in their career, before the stain of crime defaces their *honour*, and blurs the dignity of their *title* with shame.

And above all, ye who have suffered persecution, know that the virtuous man,

struggling with difficulty, and maintaining the fortitude to surmount it, without giving way to *despair*, has been pronounced the delight of heaven and the admiration of man. *Despair* excites *revenge*, that sears the seeds of virtue, and often leads to our own destruction instead of the accomplishment of what it seeks.

To the enlightened we need not repeat, our *reason* is afforded to correct our *passions*; but there may yet be some who have never given these things mature consideration, to such we would apply, and to those who *have* we hope they will pardon it. Though they may expect nothing new, even in their visits to the temple of the *Most High*, still they are again reminded of what is good, and the event rests with themselves.

As the convulsion of the elements prevents dissolution, so the application of our

*reason* on our *passions* preserves the whole man, and the more we find the heyday of the blood that occasions *those passions* within us, the oftener should *our reason* be applied. The element of fire purifies the metallic system and allows the different qualities to amalgamate, so patience subdues the human mind to a state of social intercourse with our brothers in creation; but *passion surmounting reason* renders human nature *combustible*, and liable, as is gunpowder, to be exploded by the first opposite principle applied.

*Fear* is a weakness, and our reason is to afford us a resolution, not to yield to it beyond the dictates of propriety. *Anger* should be curbed, even though it may proceed from a just cause, as it is a fever of the startled senses, and may lead our resentment beyond bounds, whilst charity teaches us rather to brook an insult than

return it twofold. *Despair* is a dangerous passion, and should be almost as carefully checked as insanity. What we have to guard against in *Hope* is, that of not being too sanguine, for that leads on to disappointment, and from thence to the latter malady. *Revenge* is a fruitless passion oftentimes, and by no means a profitable, though sometimes a fatal one, and should be crushed in its birth. *Jealousy* should never be entertained without just grounds, and even then administered to by wisdom; it is a child of hell, and its efforts are horrible as the regions that gave it birth. *Melancholy* is an imbecility of the soul, and should be destroyed by industry of mind and virtuous exercise. Its opposite, *Cheerfulness*, we have little to complain of, provided it does not descend to prophane levity and forgetfulness of the celestial spring from whence it flows. Lastly, let our *Joy* be the joy of

reason rather than that of intoxication—rather the joy of angels than that described by our immortal poet, of the infernals when (in the absence of their confounded leader)

> "Each his several way
> Pursues, as inclination or sad choice
> Leads him perplexed, where he may likeliest find
> Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain
> The irksome hours, till his great chief return.

Whilst some,

> —"with vast Typhæan rage more fell,
> Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air
> In whirlwind; hell scarce holds the wild uproar."

As the errors of Wolfred were grounded in *ambition*, so did those of Athelstan terminate in his pursuit of *revenge*; the one led on to the *injury of others*, the

other proceeded from *injuries received*; the former was culpable for *encouraging a passion*, and the latter for *not checking it*; had they invoked *reason* to their aid, and *the spirit of divine assistance*, patience might have held them in serenity, and the evening of their days been peace.

Ethelbald's too hasty suspicions were corrected by the events accompanying them, and the rest of the characters punished and rewarded according to their deeds, which we find must occur of course *in a physical sense*, as time pursues its operations.

To those who do not relish the application of a tale, the conclusion of this volume may be superfluous; but, be our's the task to hold the index up to virtue, whatever event succeeds. May this be perused by our offspring, and teach them to employ *reason* as *the great antidote to*

*their passions*, when these bones are laid in the *grave*, with a hope of the spirit's safe departure to that abode where *all labours cease*, and the weary pilgrim, fatigued with his journey, sits down *in peace with his God.*

FINIS.

J. G. BARNARD, SKINNER-STREET, LONDON.